INQUIRY

MAGAZINE

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Getting the Assassination Probe on Track

How the ACLU Condones Psychiatric Slavery

The Story Behind the Crisis in Nicaragua

A Report on Carter's Social Security Tax

REMEMBERING PAUL GOODMAN

Michael Rossman

George Dennison

Lewis Perry

Emile Capouya

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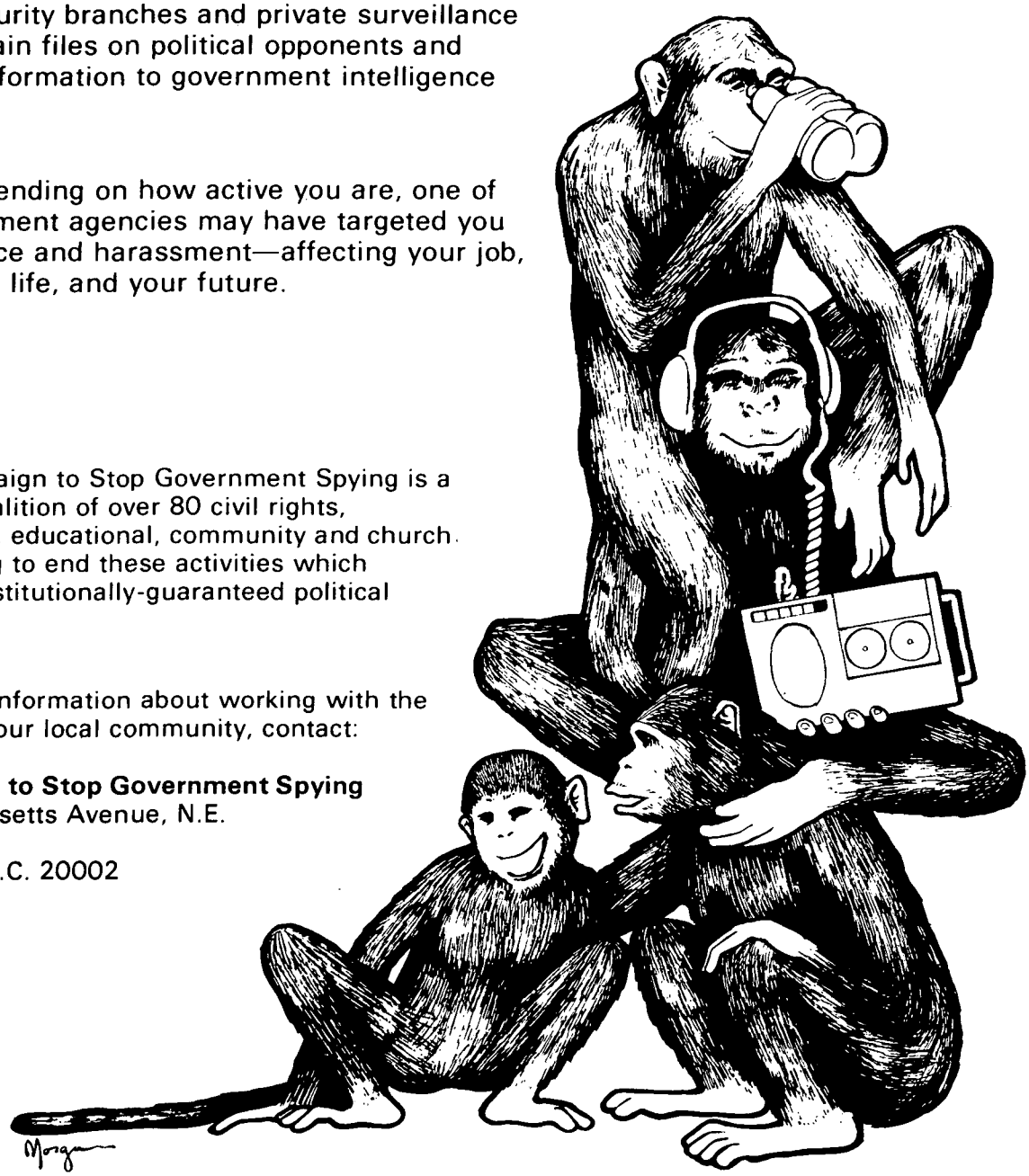
Are you politically active?

Despite official government claims to the contrary, US government intelligence abuses continue. Since January, 1977, the Senate Intelligence Committee has given its approval to six current CIA covert operations. The FBI still spies on and harasses individuals and organizations because of their political beliefs and activities. Many local and state police departments maintain intelligence offices to monitor community political activities.

If you have been politically active in this country, chances are that some government agency has a file on you—the FBI, CIA, DEA, IRS, INS, AFT and state, local and campus police departments. Utility intelligence offices, corporate security branches and private surveillance groups maintain files on political opponents and supply that information to government intelligence agencies.

And, depending on how active you are, one of these government agencies may have targeted you for surveillance and harassment—affecting your job, your personal life, and your future.



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PAUL GOODMAN WAS THE father of a generation. As Michael Rossman writes in the first of four articles about Goodman in this issue's book section, "He touched my life as he touched my generation, our time: persistently, with blunt grace and small hope of heed, always with more than we could readily digest—some deep integrity of vision and purpose as a social man, more radical than each particular flood of his opinions and ideas." The editors of INQUIRY also remember Paul Goodman —humanist, radical, his own man—and we dedicate this issue to his memory and to his work.

Can Congress crack the Kennedy assassination?

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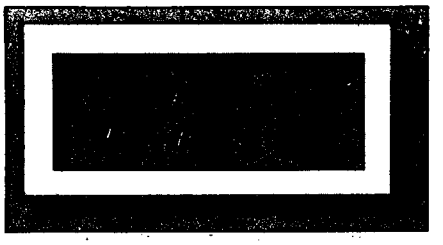

And if that doesn't work, try the zoning laws

■ The American Jewish Congress, concerned by anguished reports from Jewish parents of young people involved in a variety of new religious groups, has started a nationwide campaign to gather information on the groups and to press for legal and legislative action against their activities. . . .

Mrs. [Naomi] Levine said the AJC was particularly interested in using the Fair Labor Standards Act, which regulates rates of pay and hours that employees can work, to start lawsuits against any of the sects [such as the Unification Church or Jews for Jesus] that parents have complained about. . . .

"We want to find ways to impair their activity that do not infringe on religious liberty," she said. "We pride ourselves in being very creative lawyers, and we are going to search to see if there is anything that can be done."

—*New York Times, Jan. 26, 1978*

Old soldiers don't fade away . . .

■ Military retirement payments will total $9.1 billion this year and are expected to increase by about one-third by the year 2000.

—*United Press, Jan. 12, 1978*

. . . they just double-dip

■ Thomas Lemuel Johns earns $47,025 a year as administrative officer and security coordinator for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Johns also gets monthly pension checks that total $31,200 a year for his 21 years with the Secret Service (he was head of the White House detail). So Johns' annual income of $78,225—which is completely legal—puts him above his boss, HEW secretary Joseph A. Califano ($66,000), and he also tops the wages of Vice President Mondale ($75,000). Recent reports say Johns' double-dipping probably makes him the second highest paid employee of the federal government. But Eileen Shanahan, HEW's assistant secretary for public affairs, says that's not true. "Of the 141,000 military retirees who are now working elsewhere in the government, there may be a great many whose combined pensions and current salaries exceed his."

—*Los Angeles Times, Feb. 1, 1978*

The plane was going anyway

■ Defense Secretary Harold Brown and his wife flew military planes to and from Puerto Rico for a naval site inspection and a one-week winter vacation without reimbursing the government for air fare, the Armed Forces Journal reported. The Pentagon said part of Brown's trip was official business and it was "regular practice" for the wife of a defense secretary to accompany him free of charge.

—*Los Angeles Times, Jan. 29, 1978*

Four more years

■ A key Democratic rule-making group, with White House aides taking a leading role, recommended today a series of changes in the Presidential nominating process that would eliminate the early Iowa caucuses that gave President Carter his start two years ago.

The package of recommendations, interpreted by supporters and critics as intended to hinder any Democratic challenge to Mr. Carter's renomination in 1980, would go before the Democratic National Committee for action, probably in April.

—*New York Times, Jan. 23, 1978*

But they know it won't be less

■ The Army expects to buy more than 7,000 Chrysler Corp. XM1 tanks, more than double the initial purchase plan. Original plans called for the Army to buy 3,325 of the tanks for $4.9 billion; it hasn't yet calculated the cost of the expanded purchase.

—*Wall Street Journal, Feb, 1, 1978*

Not to worry

■ The Fiscal 1979 budget submitted to Congress last week by President Jimmy Carter offers substantial business for aerospace. Although generally characterized by veteran Washington budget analysts as a "caretaker budget" that continues the mixture as before and offers few strides in new directions, it does show a small but genuine increase in both defense and aerospace spending. It is certainly not the major $6–7 billion defense budget slash trumpeted by candidate Jimmy Carter in his presidential campaign rhetoric.

—*Aviation Week , Jan. 30, 1978*

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The Carter defense budget

Back to flexible response

IN THE EARLY DAYS OF HIS CAMPAIGN, JIMMY Carter advocated a $15 billion cut in military spending. Later he lowered this figure to $5–7 billion, but no one mistook his basic intention: If elected president, Jimmy Carter would cut the defense budget. Therefore, a number of people were a bit surprised last month when President Carter submitted his military budget for fiscal year 1979, his first as chief executive, and it turned out to be $126 billion, $10 billion more than last year's budget. After allowing for inflation, this amounts to an increase of about 3 percent.

Carter's explanation, namely, that what he really meant by his campaign promise was that he would make reductions in the budgets projected by the previous administration, is pretty lame. If that's what he had meant, that's what he would have said in the first place. However, it would be a mistake to dwell on this latest example of Carter's mendacity. Let's simply affirm what should have been apparent from the beginning—that Carter's basic instincts on foreign and military policy are barely distinguishable from those of a long line of his predecessors—and look at what the policies indicated by the new budget say about how this particular administration plans to continue exerting American power throughout the world.

To begin with, the Carter administration differs from the Nixon-Ford administration on matters of nuclear strategy. Under the 1979 budget, the amount of money to be spent on strategic forces does not increase as it has for the past few years. The Carter administration has also indicated that, unlike the previous administration, it is not interested in being able to fight and win a limited nuclear war. This, of course, was a pet project of the previous secretary of defense, James R. Schlesinger, and the departure from this strategy is significant because it reflects the Carter administration's judgment (expressed in the still secret but widely quoted Presidential Review Memorandum 10) that in a nuclear war with Russia, neither side "could conceivably be described as a winner."

This is, of course, true. The question, then, is what other conclusions has the Carter administration drawn from this rather elementary insight?

Unfortunately, as the new budget reveals, the administration's response has been to increase spending for conventional forces, particularly for the Army. The reasoning behind this shift is that if nuclear weapons have lost their political and military value, the United States has no choice but to use its conventional forces to accomplish the same ends. Much of the new money in the budget is for beefing up NATO and developing strike forces that could be moved to trouble spots around the world. According to news reports, Carter himself has directed the Pentagon to develop highly mobile forces capable of making a "quick hit in remote places."

All this has a familiar and ominous ring to it. We are back in the days of Kennedy and "flexible response," and we must now begin to worry about when and where the next Vietnam will occur. Will it be Korea, to which Carter not long ago pledged the undying support of the United States? Or the Horn of Africa, where the involvement of the Soviet Union and Cuba is becoming a matter of concern to administration officials? Or the Persian Gulf, where, as Secretary of Defense Harold Brown recently noted in a document supporting the administration's new emphasis on quick reaction forces, "events could soften the glue" of the NATO alliance? The possibilities for these disastrous adventures, and others, are inherent in the new Carter defense budget. ❏

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THOMAS SZASZ

Condoning psychiatric slavery

THE AMERICAN CIVIL LIBerties Union has a long history of uncritically accepting the concept of mental illness and of casually delegating to the psychiatric profession the "treatment" of this "illness" by imprisonment. The chairman of the ACLU's National Advisory Council is Ramsey Clark. His view on civil commitment epitomizes the organization's approach to the problem: "Where commitment is necessary, civil commitment of a contractual nature offers the opportunity for physical control . . . without the stigma of a conviction for crime. Voluntary participation, which is the basis for civil commitment, creates an attitude helpful in achieving a cure."

The fact that psychiatric imprisonment is called "civil commitment" is, of course, simply a part of the linguistic deception characteristic of the mental health system. Since civil commitment results in the loss of liberty and subjects the victim to health hazards at the hands of medical criminals whose ostensible healing function is legitimized by the state, it entails far greater deprivation of rights than does incarceration in prison, a penalty carefully circumscribed by constitutional guarantees and judicial safeguards.

After the New York Civil Liberties Union's adoption of an anticommitment resolution in 1969, the board of directors of the national ACLU engaged in some soul-searching concerning the pros and cons of commitment. Thus, the ACLU arrived at its present policy on psychiatric coercion after having thoroughly familiarized itself with the medical, moral, and legal parameters of the problem. Its 1976 policy statement represents a well-considered position and is the more important for being so. I shall first quote and comment on the most important parts of this policy statement and then conclude with a general assessment of the ACLU's continued support of psychiatric imprisonment and torture.

The ACLU's *1976 Policy Guide* devotes three pages to what it calls "The Mentally Ill." "Policy #236" is entitled "Civil Commitment." The fact that the ACLU begins its presentation of the rights of persons threatened with psychiatric deprivations of their constitutional rights, by adhering without any qualification whatever to the conventional psychiatric terminology, foreshadows its conclusions. According to the ACLU, some persons are "mentally ill," or have a "mental illness." At the same time, involuntary mental hospitalization is not imprisonment; it is "civil commitment."

"The individual should not be incarcerated prior to a hearing, except in an emergency. . . ." Being psychiatrically incarcerated *after* a hearing is, in this view, sufficient protection for persons accused of mental illness.

"During such periods of emergency commitment, no action should be taken on the person which might have a permanent effect, and the use of drugs should be limited solely to those deemed by the attending physician to be medically essential to reasonable custody prior to the hearing."

Do physicians ever admit to using drugs that are not "medically essential"? The question the ACLU should be confronting here is not only what to do with the person accused of mental illness, but also who defines that person as mentally ill and who defines what constitutes a "medically essential" psychiatric intervention? Note that at the beginning of the above paragraph the victim of psychiatry is identified as a "person"; in the sentence following the one quoted above, however, he is called a "patient." It is precisely that involuntary transformation of a human being from person to patient that the ACLU ought to scrutinize and oppose. How can one be a patient if one has no disease? Why should one be a patient if one does not want to be (even if one has a disease)? The ACLU assiduously avoids these questions.

MOREOVER, BY SPECIFYing that "the use of drugs should be limited . . . to [those] essential for reasonable custody . . ." the ACLU endorses the use of drugs as chemical straitjackets. In so supporting the use of chemical agents under pseudomedical auspices for "custodial" purposes—that is, for the forcible control of individuals innocent of crime—the ACLU comes down squarely in support of some of the most odious psychiatric methods of social control (now widely used in the Soviet Union and righteously denounced in the West).

"Persons being held pending judicial commitment proceedings . . . must have full opportunity to prepare for the commitment proceeding and make an informed defense." In the courtroom, one can defend oneself only against an accusation. But the ACLU bases its policy on the premise that mental illness is not a legal accusation but a medical abnormality. It never calls the victim a person "accused of mental illness."

"While the hearing in a civil commitment proceeding need not necessarily take on the physical appearance of a trial . . . the hearing should be held in an open courtroom, whether in or outside of a hospital." How can a hearing in an open courtroom not take on the physical appearance of a trial? Why should it not take on such an appearance? Note the ACLU's concern with the *physical appearance* of the hearing, rather than with its *human reality.*

"The judge should carefully instruct the jury on the relevant criteria for commitment, insuring the use of defined standards. . . ." This recommendation is completely inconsistent with the previous recommendation to avoid the appearance of a trial. Moreover, it reveals—perhaps more dramatically than any other single sentence in this dismal document—the ACLU's implacable hostility to both lunacy and liberty. Why? Because it is in the very nature of the problems that "mental illness" poses that there are no meaningful "defined standards" for commitment, nor can there be any. But let us suppose that there were such standards. Would that make strict judicial adherence to them enough to satisfy a true civil libertarian that fundamental human rights are protected? In effect, what the ACLU is saying here is that American chattel

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slavery is all right, so long as judges and juries make sure that only blacks are enslaved; or that Nazi genocide is all right, so long as judges and juries make sure that only Jews are gassed. Instead of scrutinizing and opposing the judicial procedures used to imprison and torture "lunatics," the ACLU strengthens still further the forces of the dominant social ethic by making its persecutory practices conform to the highest procedural standards of the law.

"The individual shall be present at the hearing. . . . If the hearing is held in a hospital, the individual should not appear in hospital attire, as this might prejudice the jury against his or her case." Holding the commitment hearing in a madhouse does not prejudice the jury; seeing the victim garbed as a madman does!

"The state must probe beyond a reasonable doubt the need for commitment and the absence of less drastic alternatives with an equal chance of correcting the individual's alleged malady." By thus linking "the need for commitment" to a "malady," the ACLU here takes the position that the purpose of involuntary mental hospitalization is curing the patient's mental illness. It then immediately contradicts this position, as we shall see in a moment, by endorsing the protection of others from the danger the "patient" poses as an equally legitimate ground for his involuntary psychiatric treatment.

"*THE STATE IS OBLIGATED to finance treatment in noncoercive settings before it invokes involuntary commitment proceedings.*" Although this whole document is highly revealing of the ACLU's prejudices about mental patients, this sentence is perhaps the most revealing. Commitment is really a new version of the white man's burden: Ensconced in plush offices, supported by many of the financial and legal pillars of society, the board of directors of the ACLU views everyone threatened with psychiatric incarceration as poor! Why else should the state pay for the treatment of everyone who becomes a candidate for commitment? Marilyn Monroe was committed. Ernest Hemingway was committed. Countless rich people have been, and continue to be, committed. Doesn't the ACLU know that?

Moreover, not only does the foregoing sentence reek of a condescending charity toward putative poor psychotics, it is also irrelevant to the issue under consideration—the fate of persons who resist being categorized as mentally ill and the consequences of being so labeled. Undeterred by that simple fact, the ACLU pontificates about the state financing "treatment in noncoercive settings" for such persons. But how do you provide such a service when the thing its recipient wants most is not to get the service? Never mind. I am being too literal. Obviously, the ACLU is here supporting the offering of ostensibly noncoercive "treatment" before the uncooperative subject is really given the treatment.

"The individual should be allowed to refuse any treatment for mental illness, except such treatment as may be required to prevent the patient from being a danger to others. . . ."

It is precisely the involuntary transformation from person to patient that the ACLU ought to scrutinize and oppose. How can one be a patient if one has no disease?

Many of the ACLU's recommendations concerning civil commitment imply that the purpose of psychiatric confinement is to provide psychiatric treatment. But if the "patient" is allowed to reject treatment, why is he not allowed to reject hospitalization? If he is competent to make the one judgment, why not the other?

The ACLU here not only accuses the "mental patient" of threatening the safety of others, it also reendorses the use of coerced psychiatric "treatment" for frankly nontherapeutic purposes—that is, for preventing "danger to others." In so doing, the ACLU goes beyond supporting the odious practice of preventive detention: It endorses as well the practice of pharmaceutically immobilizing the innocent individual preventively detained by psychiatric "hospitalization." Mentally healthy persons have a constitutional right to be dangerous to others. The ACLU does not explain why it proposes to strip mentally sick persons of that right. This omission is especially puzzling in view of the fact that the organization is intent on preserving all of the significant civil rights of the committed mental patient:

"No person should be deprived of his or her civil rights, such as the power to control assets, make contracts, vote, engage in occupations, and control other nonmedical personal affairs, solely by reason of commitment." Does the ACLU really mean this? Persons incarcerated in insane asylums should have the right to work as policemen, teach school, serve as senators, pilot airplanes—perhaps even practice psychiatry?

The imbecility of the ACLU's policy on insanity here approaches infinity. If the committed mental patient retains all of these civil rights, then why should he not also retain his civil duty to obey the law? In the light of the above-quoted sentence, what does the ACLU mean by referring to mental patients as "dangerous"? Persons either injure others in a manner prohibited by law or they don't. If they injure others, their offense is a matter for the criminal law. If they don't, they ought to be left alone. The ACLU sidesteps all these basic issues.

ONE OF THE MOST INTEResting things about the ACLU's 1976 policy statement on civil commitment is what it omits: dangerousness to oneself. The danger of suicide is the foremost reason that psychiatrists now advance to justify involuntary mental hospitalization and treatment. The ACLU is silent about it. Does a person have a right to kill himself? Does only a sane person have such a right? Does no one have such a right? Surely these are among some of the most important questions that confront any civil libertarian who tries, sincerely and seriously, to come to grips with the civil liberties aspects of psychiatric coercion. Because the ACLU avoids these issues—it does not even allude to them as problems—I contend that its entire position on psychiatric matters is pervaded and vitiated by bad faith.

The ACLU's 1976 policy statement on "civil commitment" is an evil document: It is nothing less than an unqualified support of psychiatric slavery—of psychiatric defamation called "diagnosis," of psychiatric imprisonment called "hospitalization," and of psychiatric torture called "treatment."

It is also a linguistically debauched document: It is poorly reasoned, it is internally contradictory, and it exudes that insincerity which, as Orwell aptly observed, characterizes the totalitarian mind at work with words.

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PENNY LERNOUX

Nicaragua on the brink

NICARAGUAN PRESIDENT Anastasio Somoza is a sick man these days. He has a serious heart condition, which prevents him from working more than three hours a week, and a bad case of the political shakes—not since his father put down a popular guerrilla uprising more than four decades ago has there been so much opposition to the Somoza dynasty. This opposition is now so widespread that a general strike, including a business shutdown backed by the country's top business leaders, has led President Somoza to move the National Guard into the capital city of Managua.

Although the Somozas have always had to deal with a certain amount of internal discontent—11 different rebellions since 1948—international opinion virtually ignored what happened in the small Central American country until last year when the U.S. Congress, the local Catholic church, and Amnesty International produced evidence of the wholesale violation of human rights in Nicaragua, including the massacre of 224 peasants in the northern departments of Zelaya and Matagalpa. So long as the Somozas could count on the U.S. government for economic aid and military support, local opposition groups posed no threat to the regime; now that the dictatorship is under attack by human rights lobbyists in Washington, however, the Somozas are beginning to feel the heat. (The Carter administration withheld $12 million in economic aid last year as a sign of its displeasure.)

Panic may be setting in if one is to judge by the ill-conceived murder by paid assassins of one of Somoza's principal political foes, newspaper publisher Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, in Managua on January 10. Somoza had earlier lifted a state of siege, reshuffled his cabinet, and abolished some press restrictions as a sop to Washington. But when a left-wing guerrilla movement called the Sandinista Front of National Liberation took advantage of this apparent weakness—and of Somoza's failing health—to launch simultaneous attacks in northern and southern Nicaragua, Somoza reverted to form by renewing repression in rural areas and the Managua slums. Particularly favored was the shantytown of Open, where Nicaraguan, Spanish, and U.S. priests and nuns were set upon by the army when they attempted to defend the slum dwellers during a demonstration against inadequate public transportation. Like the slum rally, which quickly developed into a general protest against the Somoza government, the guerrilla attacks revealed a surprising degree of discontent within business and professional circles, which publicly supported the rebellion. Though a military failure, the uprising—and the unsuspected opposition—gave President Somoza a bad fright. Newspaper publisher Chamorro probably sealed his fate by announcing a five-point manifesto demanding a return to democracy just when the army was chasing guerrilla fighters.

THE LEADER OF A CENTER-left coalition known as the Democratic Liberation Union (UDEL), which includes members of the traditional Conservative and Liberal parties, Social Christians, and two labor federations, the 53-year-old Chamorro was a potential contender for the presidency, not only as a well-known national figure, thanks to his crusading newspaper *La Prensa*, but as one of the few men of his generation never compromised by the Somozas. As a colleague remarked, in describing the outspoken publisher's frequent stints in jail and exile, Chamorro refused to give up, whereas most Nicaraguans of his age have long since tired of fighting the Somoza dictatorship. "Imagine living under the Pinochet junta in Chile for 42 years, and you have some idea of what it is like in Nicaragua," said a university professor.

According to conservative estimates, some 25,000 Nicaraguans have died in opposition to the Somoza dynasty in the past four decades. Those who survived, including the sons and daughters of the Nicaraguan aristocracy, were either bought off, forced into exile, or caught in the economic vise of the Somoza family, which dominates Nicaragua's industry, agriculture, and banks. In order to silence Chamorro, for example, the president of Somoza's rubber-stamp congress threatened him with bankruptcy by demanding damages worth the approximate value of *La Prensa* on a trumped-up libel charge last year. But Chamorro wasn't frightened. "I will continue to fight no matter what happens," he said.

His last editorial campaign was directed against a Managua blood-export firm called Plasmaferesis, jointly controlled by Somoza and exiled Cubans. Somoza has since tried to pin the blame for the murder on his erstwhile Cuban

partner and the director of the company, Dr. Pedro Ramos, who was supposed to have masterminded the assassination from his residence in Miami, a story that only the government believes.

AS COLOMBIAN NOVELIST Gabriel Garcia-Marquez described in his best-selling novel, *The Autumn of the Patriarch*, the first thing a Latin American dictator does when he feels his grip slipping is to increase repression, and Somoza is no exception. Determined to assure the succession of his 27-year-old son, Anastasio III, who has increasingly taken over the duties of the father, Nicaragua's ailing strongman has already cleared the way by crushing the ambitions of such henchmen as Cornelio Hueck, who was sacked from his job as secretary-general of Somoza's Nationalist Liberal Party. (One of the persons the government has arrested and charged with Chamorro's murder has now claimed that Hueck helped finance the killing.) More dangerous challengers, including Chamorro, have been eliminated or forced to seek exile. Somoza is also dis-

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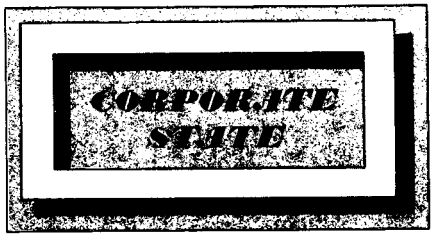
covering that it hardly matters what Washington thinks when the U.S. government is not prepared to use its economic muscle in such lending agencies as the Inter-American Development Bank or the International Monetary Fund, the suspension of economic aid being no more than a rap on the knuckles as long as no pressure is exerted through the international banks.

In any case, the Somozas can still count on some powerful friends in Congress, including New York Congressman John Murphy, who organized the $207,000 lobby responsible for blitzing attempts by Representative Edward Koch's House subcommittee on international organizations to suspend $3.1 million in military aid to Nicaragua last year for human rights violations. Ronald Reagan has since taken up Somoza's cause by telling anyone who will listen how lucky the United States is to have such a staunch, "anti-Communist" ally in Central America. And while—with all the administration's talk of human rights these days—it may be embarrassing to recognize such old-fashioned dictators as friends, there is no obvious candidate whom Washington can encourage, in contrast to Chile, for example, where former Christian Democrat President Eduardo Frei still offers the possibility of a democratic alternative to Pinochet. Chamorro came closest to that description, and he is dead.

As described in "Autumn of the Patriarch," the first thing a dictator does when he feels his grip slipping is to increase repression.

As in Garcia-Marquez's *Patriarch*, which was modeled to a large extent on the Somozas, the family has ruled for so long, amid such widespread repression and corruption, that, in the words of Chamorro, it has "destroyed the moral fiber of the country." However, in Nicaragua's case, the patriarch of the Somoza family did not come to power through the usual military *putsch*. He was placed there by the U.S. government in 1936. ❑



WILLIAM GOODFELLOW

Another bailout for multinationals

TUCKED AWAY IN THE VAST Washington bureaucracy is a little-known U.S. government agency—the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC)—that offers political risk insurance to American multinational corporations investing in underdeveloped countries. OPIC offers insurance against expropriation, war, revolution, insurrection, and related business hazards, and is backed by the "full faith and credit" of the U.S. Treasury, that is, the American taxpayer.

If, for instance, Dow Chemical, OPIC's number-one corporate client, had one of its petrochemical plants expropriated by Brazil, the loss would be borne by the U.S. government, rather than by Dow.

OPIC was established in 1969 when New York's Republican Senator Jacob Javits guided a bill through Congress separating OPIC's insurance functions from the Agency for International Development (AID). Richard Nixon was an enthusiastic promoter of OPIC, as were many other powerful Republicans in the House and Senate.

From its inception, however, it has been opposed by most Democrats in Congress and by U.S. labor unions, who depict OPIC as just one part of a package of tax incentives and government subsidies that make it easier for U.S. corporations to move their operations abroad to the lands of cheap labor and tax holidays.

More troubling are charges that OPIC subverts the conduct of U.S. foreign policy by equating the interests of U.S. multinational corporations with those of the American people. After extensive hearings in 1974, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee charged that the "program seems more likely to embroil the United States in the internal policies of host countries than would otherwise be the case." The committee concluded, "We doubt that this identity of interest, achieved through the instrumentality of the [OPIC] guarantee program . . . is good, in the long run, either for the corporations themselves or for the U.S. Government."

Inherent in the nature of OPIC contracts is the potential for confrontation between the United States and a host government. Virtually all OPIC insurance policies are written for a period of 20 years. Third World governments change much more frequently. Yet what OPIC insures is that over the long run, host governments will not change the terms of the initial investment, including increases in tax rates, in a manner adverse to a U.S. corporation.

Two factors assure the inherent instability of OPIC contracts. First is the rapid social and political changes taking place as Third World nations modernize economically. Second is the shift in bargaining power between corporation and host government as the latter becomes more familiar with dealing with foreign corporations.

Through OPIC, the United States may find itself protecting the status quo interests of U.S. business against the wishes of a host government.

OPIC does not have a charter of its own, so every three or four years it must go before Congress for new legislative authority. When Jimmy Carter won the presidency in November, OPIC's prospects for an extension of its operating authority (which was due to expire at the end of December 1977), seemed dim indeed. With a Democratic president *and* a Democratic Congress, OPIC's management had reason to worry about their jobs. But help arrived from an unlikely corner.

JIMMY CARTER, FRIEND OF the little guy and scourge of special interests, adopted OPIC as his own. A special cabinet-level Economic Policy Group conducted a "review" of the OPIC program, and with a few minor modifications, a Republican pork-barrel project for multinational corporations emerged as a Democratic program to promote development in the poorest countries of the Third World.

Carter's links with multinational

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corporations were firmly established during his three years as a member of David Rockefeller's Trilateral Commission. Not only did the new president bring 16 top members of his administration from the Trilateral Commission (most of whom previously worked for multinational corporations), he brought as well the Trilateralist conviction that U.S. multinationals are missionaries spreading stability and the American way in the Third World.

In the spring of 1977 both the Senate and the House held extensive hearings on OPIC. Witnesses praised OPIC's record, and only one outside witness opposed granting OPIC its three-year extension. Trilateral Commission member C. Fred Bergsten, one of OPIC's most articulate critics while he was at the Brookings Institution, as the new assistant secretary of the Treasury testified in support of OPIC and was even named to OPIC's board of directors. Henry Kissinger, in the capacity of private citizen, made a surprise appearance on OPIC's behalf before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as a personal favor to Senator Javits.

By mid-October hearings on OPIC were completed and the corporation's fortunes seemed to be improving. The *Wall Street Journal* ran a story headlined "OPIC Is Making a Political Comeback After Congress Tried to Abolish It in 1974," and a week later OPIC's renewal passed on the Senate floor by a lopsided 69 to 12 vote. Senator Church, OPIC's most ardent critic in the Senate, was not even present for the vote.

OPIC's director of congressional relations, Steve Franklin, who had masterminded its legislative strategy was so sure of a speedy victory that he went ahead and booked reservations for a long-overdue vacation.

But the euphoria at OPIC lasted only a week. On November 2 and 3, the OPIC bill was debated on the House floor, and after two crippling amendments had passed by 100-plus vote margins, the bill was pulled off the floor to avoid an outright defeat of the entire program. The November 4 *Wall Street Journal* carried a story headlined "Extension for OPIC . . . Stalled in House."

Since no action was taken on the OPIC renewal bill during the remainder of the legislative session, OPIC's authority to write new insurance policies expired on December 31. The corporation is now in a comatose state, and Legislative Director Steve Franklin has had to postpone his vacation indefinitely.

The House has scheduled additional hearings on OPIC, as well as more floor debate; OPIC's future is thus unlikely to be decided before March.

EDWARD CARBAJAL

The reasons for OPIC's unpopularity in some quarters are not hard to discover.

*DESPITE A 1974 CONGRES-*sional directive to give preferential treatment to small companies, OPIC's insurance has continued to be concentrated in the largest U.S. multinational corporations. Between 1974 and 1976, 41 percent of new policies went to just 11 companies: Dow Chemical, W. R. Grace, J. P. Morgan, Celanese, General Telephone and Electronics (GT&E), Getty Oil, Bank of America, Standard Oil of Indiana, Weyerhaeuser, ITT, and RCA. The increasingly large concentration of insurance going to these companies raises further questions regarding the necessity of the program. First, the insured corporations, all with annual sales above $1.9 billion, may well be capable themselves of absorbing losses now guaranteed by the U.S. government. Further, these huge enterprises are not incapable of risk-management schemes of their own design.

The record makes clear that OPIC's policies favor the largest corporations. In 1974, 49 percent of the number of OPIC-insured investors could be found on *Fortune*'s list of the largest 500 corporations and the largest 50 banks and utilities; in 1975 that figure climbed to 62 percent, and by 1976 fully 68 went to *Fortune*'s largest. The 1973 Senate hearings revealed—not surprisingly—that government subsidization of risk led to a more lax behavior abroad on the part of some OPIC-insured companies.

In 1974 OPIC was also directed to reduce its concentration in just a few countries, and to give preferential treatment to projects in countries that have a per capita annual income of $450 or less. OPIC insists that it has made efforts to reduce the concentration of its policies, but has found U.S. corporations unwilling to go into the least-developed countries with substantial capital investments.

Between 1974 and 1976, 60 percent of the dollar volume of OPIC insurance was issued in just six countries: Brazil, the Philippines, South Korea, Indonesia, Taiwan, and the Dominican Republic.

These countries have long been objects of supportive attention from the U.S. government, but further OPIC aid for business dealings is now threatened by the corporation's own shaky future. At the same time, these countries have rather abysmal records on the human rights issues that the Carter administration has made the rhetorical theme of American foreign policy. The familiar strain that juggling of human rights

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principles and American commercial and military interests has placed on administration policy will also affect the debate on the future of OPIC.

THE MOST DISTURBING aspect of OPIC is that by design its operations constantly present the U.S. government with a choice of two evils: interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, or placing on the already heavily burdened American taxpayer the losses suffered by corporations as a result of social upheavals in foreign lands.

In 1975, when even U.S. Ambassador Graham Martin was despairing of South Vietnam's chances for survival, OPIC issued a $117,600 insurance policy to the Singer Sewing Machine Company for facilities in Saigon. A 1975 OPIC press release characterized the resumption of its program in South Vietnam as "prudent." Before OPIC had an opportunity to process any additional applications for insurance in South Vietnam, the U.S.-sponsored government and army of Nguyen Van Thieu had collapsed, as had Singer's plans for a factory in Saigon.

OPIC faced an even greater disaster in Chile, when the socialist government of Salvador Allende nationalized the U.S.-owned copper mines in Chile and the assets of the International Telephone and Telegraph Company (ITT). In this case the potential claims amounted to $236.3 million (although OPIC's insurance reserves at the time were only $85 million). It was not until after the military junta overthrew the Allende government that the outstanding claims were finally settled. Chile's military junta, anxious to improve its image with foreign investors, agreed to issue Chilean government notes, guaranteed by OPIC, as compensation for assets nationalized by Allende.

OPIC now wants to resume relations with Chile and has been negotiating a new bilateral treaty with the government. Already it has 22 applications for insurance. Because of the Pinochet government's dismal human rights record, the State Department is opposing OPIC's return to Chile. The Chile desk officer at State also questions OPIC's eagerness to return to that country: "The decision to go back in certainly wasn't made by an actuary. Chile almost wiped OPIC out in 1974." Because of the generally adverse public opinion, it is certain that OPIC will not go back into Chile while its fate is being determined in Congress. "Issuing contracts in Chile would ruin us in Congress," one senior OPIC official remarked. However, once Congress has voted on OPIC's budget, there will be nothing to prevent OPIC from taking up again with Chile.

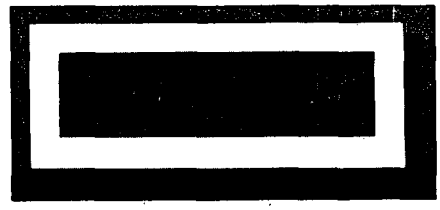
Similarly risky are new guidelines that for the first time will allow OPIC to issue policies covering oil exploration and production, and will also increase the number of policies issued for mineral extraction.

Given Third World sensitivity to resource extraction investments, OPIC would be significantly increasing its risks. A May 1977 study of expropriations by the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) found that half of all the known "investment disputes" (in most cases, expropriations) occurred in resource-extraction and related industries. Two-thirds of the total insurance claims of $336 million that OPIC has paid U.S. companies have been for expropriated mines, especially in Chile.

The new policy would, according to *Business Week,* "lessen the vulnerability of the United States and other industrial nations to supply cutoffs or producer cartels."

In order to lessen, and spread, the risks involved in insuring mineral- and petroleum-extraction projects, OPIC has proposed a plan to coordinate its insurance with Western European countries and Japan, forming partnerships of developed countries working together to protect their investments in the Third World. C. Fred Bergsten explained to a House subcommittee that the new policy would "minimize the likelihood that host countries will renege on their end of investment bargains, by maximizing the cost to them of doing so by increasing the number of home countries which would be adversely affected."

All of OPIC's plans will come to nothing if the House of Representatives refuses to renew OPIC's legislative mandate. The main opposition to OPIC comes from the AFL-CIO, as it did in 1974. Labor's concern is the effect of artificial improvement in the investment climate overseas on jobs for its members. After an initial hesitation, the big union has mobilized its lobbyists and has generated pressure on Congress from its vast membership. Much to the dismay of OPIC's management, President Carter himself has not publicly endorsed the OPIC program. There is speculation that since Carter has given labor so little this past year, he may be prepared to sacrifice OPIC with very little fight. ❑



CHARLES D. HOBBS

Social security as a con game

*ONE OF THE MORE ENTER-*taining of regular congressional rituals is the final debate on a tax increase bill. No one wants to appear to support it willingly. There is talk of impending disaster, dire necessity, compromise, and reform. Lies and statistics echo through the chambers. The melody is "Duty Calls"; the counterpoint is "Not Me." The distinguished members act like school kids on vaccination day.

It was no different last Christmas when Congress played Santa Claus to Jimmy Carter with a $257-billion social security tax increase. With traditional foresight the two houses had passed differing versions of the Christmas tax bill, so that after the differences had been ironed out in conference committee, each house could blame the other.

Russell Long eased it through the Senate, with long-toothed support from old pros like Carl Curtis, John Stennis, and Strom Thurmond. Twenty-two senators, including such friends of taxes and spending as George McGovern and Jacob Javits, found it expedient to be elsewhere when the votes were counted.

In the House, Speaker Tip O'Neill had to crack a partisan whip over the heads of the Democrats; and Ways and Means Chairman Al Ullman, an obviously reluctant floor manager, promised that "before the big [tax] bite . . . we will come in with a better financing mechanism." The vote to pass was 189 to 163; 81 members did not respond to the call.

With Congress ready to adjourn for Christmas, the report of the final bill in the House section of the *Congressional Record* was followed by Luke 2:1-14, "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar

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Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. . . . Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

THE PRESIDENT WAS pleased. Pictures taken at the signing ceremony (the pens were green) show him with a bevy of bureaucrats and congressmen. All of them except Al Ullman are laughing uproariously. And why shouldn't they? They're part of a very privileged group (federal civilian employees) that doesn't pay social security taxes.

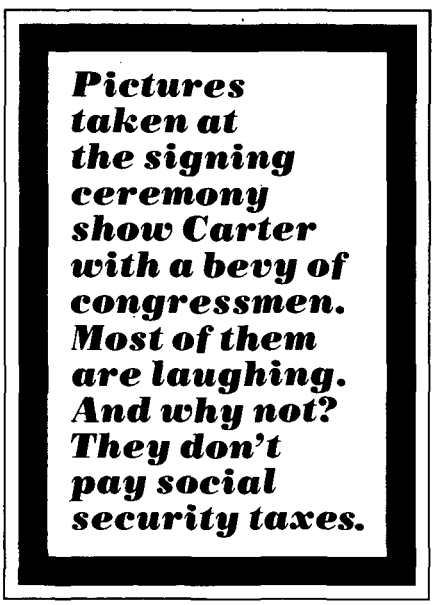
In his statement Carter called the legislation "wise" and the Christmas tax "absolutely mandatory," as if it had been the product of divine command. "Everyone in this nation who values the concept of social security has been well served."

One most wonder, however, whether that is really so. How many of us are going to feel "well served" as our social security taxes triple in the next 10 years? How valuable is a "concept" that turns the bulk of our potential savings over to the government with no guarantee of return? Will this $257 billion solve the problem once and for all or will we be hit, a few years from now, with another "absolutely mandatory" increase?

To answer these questions, we must examine the social security concept which, stripped of its rhetoric, is simple enough. A normal pension plan holds your contributions in an individual trust account and pays you from the proceeds of investments made with those contributions. Social security, in contrast, is a government trust in which returns to early investors are paid out of receipts from later investors. The trust is operated on a cash-flow basis: You pay your money in and the government immediately pays it out to someone who paid in earlier than you. When your turn comes to collect, you get the money someone else is paying in.

There is no return on investment because there is no investment, in the usual sense of that term. The trust cannot invest for profit and it doesn't hold money long enough to accumulate more than a piddling amount of interest. The only way you can get back more than you pay in is if later investors pay in more. The ability of the trust to meet its promises depends on an ever expanding group of new investors and an ever increasing investment (tax) rate.

Before the government decided to call it social security, this concept was commonly known as the "Ponzi swindle." In 1921 Charles Ponzi used it to extract some $15 million from the savings and paychecks of lower- and middle-class workers along the East Coast, on promises of a 50 percent return on investment in 45 days. There was, of course, no investment, except the one the workers made in the promises of Charles Ponzi, and returns were paid out of income from later investors. Ponzi siphoned off enough to buy a mansion, several cars, and a bank. The scheme collapsed after a few months, when the stream of gullible investors began to dwindle. Early investors made out; later investors lost everything. That's the way the scheme operates.


Pictures taken at the signing ceremony show Carter with a bevy of congressmen. Most of them are laughing. And why not? They don't pay social security taxes.

SOCIAL SECURITY IS A PONZI swindle on a grand and stretched-out scale, as its tax history illustrates. Since 1940, when social security started paying "returns," the cost of living in the United States has increased threefold. In the same period social security taxes for the average worker have increased thirtyfold, and under the new law those taxes in another 10 years will be 60 times what they were in 1940. By 1987 combined employer-employee social security payroll taxes for a worker who earns $25,000, by then the average family income, will be $3575—an effective tax rate of 13.3 percent.

Yet even before the new tax rates go into effect, one can predict that they will prove to be too small, since they are based on overly optimistic economic and demographic assumptions: a 23 percent predicted increase in a fertility rate that has declined for the past 10 years, together with predicted significant reductions in unemployment and inflation. Few would bet on a 5 percent unemployment rate by 1981 or a 4 percent inflation rate by 1982. Yet if either of these predictions proves too low by as little as 1 percent, social security will be short $50 billion in 1987, and Jimmy Carter's successor will be announcing another "absolutely mandatory" tax increase.

Franklin Roosevelt knew these problems would occur when he created social security in 1935 as part of the New Deal. His political instincts told him that Congress was incapable of letting enough money accumulate to fund an actuarially sound pension program, so he opted for a pay-as-you-go plan. The committee of bureaucrats and social-minded businessmen who designed the program first proposed a payroll tax of 1 percent (0.5 percent on the employer and 0.5 percent on the employee), telling Roosevelt that 1 percent would fund the benefits until 1965. Roosevelt, perhaps calculating the probable life spans of living historians, raised the tax to 2 percent, which he was told would fund benefits until 1980. The generosity of Congress exceeded even Roosevelt's fears; benefits and taxes have multiplied, but ironically all of the changes have led to the predicted result: a crisis in 1980.

Where has all the money gone? So far, most of it has been used as a welfare dole. Although promoted as an insurance and pension program, social security began as almost pure welfare, and even now two-thirds of its benefits are unearned. Douglas Munro of the University of Alabama calculated welfare percentages for all the years from 1940 to 1970. For those retiring in 1940, 98 percent of the benefits were above and beyond their investments, including interest. For men retiring in 1970 the welfare percentage was 68 percent; for women, 80 percent.

THE WELFARE COMPONENT is declining and will soon fall precipitously. At the same time, because of the overload that two generations of welfare under the guise of pensions has placed on the system, a debt has been accumulated that will bury the next two generations. Today's young worker will have his potential personal savings taxed away throughout his career to meet that debt. Yet when he retires he will not even get a fair return on his lifetime investment. So much will have been taken from him in taxes that, even if he were to live to 100, he would never collect the amount of his investment plus normal interest.

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This welfare overload developed because people became accustomed to getting welfare as part of their social security "pensions," and Congress became accustomed to giving it. The slight deceit became a big, institutionalized lie. Without congressional tinkering the welfare percentage would have dropped rapidly after World War II, but in every key election year between 1950 and 1972, Congress insisted on adding more and more unearned benefits.

The 1972 amendments carried welfare to what must be its ultimate absurdity, at least within the framework of social security. Automatic cost-of-living increases in benefits were coupled with automatic cost-of-living increases in the amount of earnings on which benefits were to be calculated, making retirement benefits greater than preretirement earnings, and doubling the future social security debt. When it was discovered that, to meet the debt, payroll taxes might have to be raised to 30 percent or more of earnings, Congress realized the folly of its largesse. Solemnly declaring that the 1972 coupling had been "a drafting error," Congress "decoupled" the cost-of-living escalators as part of its 1977 Christmas tax package.

At the same time, because of the overload that welfare under the guise of pensions has placed on the system, a debt has been accumulated that will bury the next two generations.

Since 1972 Congress has restrained itself from adding more unearned benefits to social secuity, and if that restraint continues, the welfare percentage will fall rapidly, reaching zero in about 20 years. Unfortunately, it's too late for the elimination of welfare to solve social security's problems.

For the welfare component of social security has only accelerated the malfunctioning of the program and dramatized its basic flaw—the social security concept itself. The program now represents a future government debt to the people of more than $4 trillion. This debt isn't counted as part of the national debt, ostensibly because it occurs in a series of special trust funds, but in reality because of the uproar its official recognition would cause.

THE VERY PREDICTABILITY of the present crisis makes the bipartisan support of social security all the more disturbing. Since the problem is so simple that a college accounting student could see that the system was heading toward bankruptcy, why have liberals and conservatives alike feigned ignorance of it over the decades? Conservatives, in particular, who are always reminding us of the evils of budget deficits, seem remarkably sanguine about a legal government financial obligation that outstrips the "official" national debt by better than five to one. And liberals, who boast of the humane manner in which they spend our money, seem cruelly political for allowing a crisis that threatens to leave millions of elderly without adequate incomes.

In the face of this debt, and needing an ever expanding investor group and ever higher taxes to meet its promises, social security is now beginning to run out of people and money, just as the Ponzi swindle did when large numbers of investors tried to collect on their investments.

In 1940, 250 workers paid into social security for every retired worker who collected benefits. By 1970 the ratio had fallen to 5 to 1. By 1980 it will be 3 to 1; in another generation it will be 2 to 1. A declining fertility rate, increased life expectancy, and the simple fact that Congress has run out of groups to add to the tax rolls, has brought the program to the point where there are too few active workers to sustain it without backbreaking taxes. That's why Carter called the Christmas tax "absolutely mandatory."

But not only are we running short of taxpayers; the taxpayers are also running out of money. Martin Feldstein of Harvard has calculated that in 1975 the $70 billion in social security taxes reduced personal savings in the United States by 44 percent. Only the first $14,000 of an individual's earnings were taxed that year. By 1987 social security will tax the first $42,600 of earnings, and at a rate 22 percent higher than that of 1975, thus taking at least two-thirds of our personal savings.

Moreover, between now and 1987, according to the Joint Economic Committee of Congress, the Christmas tax will cause a loss in GNP growth of $345 billion—a loss which translates to 10 million fewer jobs plus $1380 less pay for the average worker.

The final affront to taxpaying workers is that Congress has admitted that the Christmas tax is not a permanent solution. Al Ullman thought it might be good for 25 years. Russell Long, older and wiser, cautioned that "social security is not something dealt with once and for all by just one bill." He predicted "significant" bills "at least once every Congress." In the history of social security, "significant" legislative changes have always, sooner or later, amounted to tax increases.

JIMMY CARTER UNDERstands the social security dilemma as well as did Franklin Roosevelt, and like Roosevelt, he is doing his best to hide it from his constituents. He originally proposed to Congress that the problem of the growing deficit be solved by larger taxes on employers, a traditionally favorite proposal of organized labor, and by "contributions" from general funds, a favorite tactic of the technocrats who run the social security program. Both of these proposals were and will always be attempts to keep the people from knowing the magnitude of the social security problem and how much of their money is being used to try to solve it.

Increasing the employers' share of payroll taxes will reduce wages, since the employer regards these taxes as a cost of labor. The effect is to reduce the worker's purchasing power without his recognizing why it is reduced. This time, organized labor refused to support such an obvious deceit.

It was equally dishonest of Carter to propose diverting general funds to meet the social security deficit, on the ridiculous grounds that the federal government should, as a third "partner," "share" in social security funding with employers and employees. General funds are made up of taxes collected from the same workers and employers who feed the social security trust. Carter's proposal would take money out of two of a worker's pockets instead of one, in the hope that he would be less aware of the total loss.

Clearly it is time to end the way social security has operated in the past. Perhaps the heavy burden of the Christmas tax will stimulate needed change. ❑

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An agenda for investigators

CAN CONGRESS CRACK THE KENNEDY ASSASSINATION?

By Russell Stetler

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO SOLVE THE JFK murder case—or to satisfy the citizen-critics who have kept the case alive for 14 years? This double-edged question is hitting home in Washington, where congressional investigators face the annual task of persuading skeptical legislators to fund a probe that has so far uncovered no smoking guns. Down from Capitol Hill, the post-Hoover FBI is hoping that the sheer quantity of the assassination-related files it is releasing will impress the public that it has nothing to hide and will overwhelm spare-time researchers, who will need months if not years to assimilate the contents of another 98,000 pages of official documents.

In a strong sense, a critical moment has arrived. Congress has been looking into various aspects of President Kennedy's assassination for more than two years. The Freedom of Information Act has unleashed a torrential flow of files and reports. Murder (Sam Giancana and John Roselli) and suicide (George de Mohrenschildt) of potentially important witnesses have augmented the mood of mystery surrounding the Kennedy killing and the investigations that followed. A host of exotic would-be witnesses have offered their information and disinformation to the press—at least heightening the public's desire for clear answers. The latest books have completed the picture: details of Oswald's frustrated sex life, mug shots of the "real" assassin (who reportedly confessed to a retired law-enforcement officer with a background in military intelligence), and—for balance—the story of Oswald's secret career as a programmed KGB automaton. The time has surely come to end the madness and settle some basic questions.

ONE LARGE PROBLEM IS THAT SOLVING THE case depends on the sustained efforts and intelligent collaboration of three groups: the press, Congress, and responsible private researchers (whom I call the citizen-critics). Each has a different, vital role to play. The press can spend money to investigate a long shot that might seem an embarrassing waste of congressional funds. A tough reporter can not only get away with some investigative techniques that an ethics-conscious Congress has to avoid—for example, payoffs or wired interviews—but can also pursue leads that are just too politically sensitive for the Hill. Congress has other

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One problem is that solving the case depends on the collaboration of three groups: the press, Congress, and private researchers.

powers and duties, however, such as the unique ability to compel testimony and greater access to official documents. The citizen-critics offer expertise. They have used the 14 years since President Kennedy's assassination to analyze the existing literature in the National Archives and the Warren Commission's own 26 volumes of published testimony and evidence. Only they are in a position to tell the press or Congress what is already known (if anything) about a seemingly new lead. Working together, these three groups would be formidable. But in an adversary relationship, they may doom the investigation.

So far, the press seems to have the largest ego and the least desire to cooperate. The most recent example is, of course, press coverage of the 98,000 pages of documents released by the FBI in December and January. Half an hour after the first installment of 40,000 pages was opened to public inspection at the FBI reading room on December 7, NBC was on the air to report "no startling new revelations." Even before the papers were released, Reuters was sending out a scheduled background piece—apparently relying on FBI sources—noting that "few startling revelations are expected." UPI found a report on the Kennedy autopsy by FBI Agents James W. Sibert and Francis X. O'Neill, Jr., among the "new" documents—not realizing that the controversial five-page, single-spaced report had been available to the public from the National Archives for more than 11 years (and had been published in a few books).

(In fairness to the FBI, it should be pointed out that their handout announcing the release of the first installment indicated that much of the material had been available at the archives or even published in the Warren Commission's 26 volumes. But there is little doubt that the FBI public relations specialists were well aware of the advantages to the bureau in releasing such a massive amount of material all at once. The vast amount was just too much for the press to cope with; it seemed to show immense good will in the post-Hoover bureau—no more secrets, let all the files be opened—and a large amount of the material did show the FBI diligently pursuing even the most trivial leads and outlandish allegations.)

There is simply no way that the FBI documents could be subjected to serious analysis in a period of hours or even days. If we assume that each page contains more than 200 words of text, the 98,000 pages would fill roughly 200 average books. If a news organization employed 20 researchers to read through the documents in a normal eight-hour workday, they would have to skim through the files at a rate of more than eight pages per minute—and this would allow no time to collate their findings. Since intriguing new revelations or leads are often discovered only in the close reading of a subtle sentence or phrase, or by correlating new material with old, it follows that it is even now too early to say with certainty whether the documents released in December and January contain much of significance.

If it is too much to hope that any paper, magazine, or network will ever budget for a real investigative team to work on the Kennedy assassination, perhaps our major news organizations could at least assign a reporter to work on this story over a period of months, with a view to telling the FBI-assassination story in some depth. Even if the reporter ignored many of the wider controversies over what happened in Dealey Plaza on November 22, 1963, the inside story of how the FBI viewed and handled the Oswald case would be fascinating.

We know, for example, that J. Edgar Hoover twice asked his assistants for the files of the Warren Commission's staff—probably in the hope of finding some small scandal or political taint that could be leaked to the press to embarrass the commission (which Hoover viewed as "seeking to criticize the FBI"). Hoover's handwritten notes on many of the FBI documents are often more interesting than the reports themselves.

We know, too, that less than three weeks after the assassination, harsh action was taken inside the FBI. Seventeen employees—five field investigative agents, one field supervisor, three special agents in charge, four headquarters supervisors, two headquarters section chiefs, one inspector, and one assistant director—were censured or placed on probation for what the bureau called "shortcomings in connection with the investigation of Oswald prior to the assassination." When the Warren Report came out in September 1964, eight of the 17 were again censured or put on probation; some of the eight were transferred; and three other employees (including an assistant to the director) were disciplined for the first time.

One FBI memo (previously quoted in a Senate report) suggests that Oswald may have been viewed by the FBI as someone on undercover assignment for another federal agency. This memo relates that the bureau's "public" position before the Warren Commission was to maintain that there was no reason for it to have put a stop on Oswald's passport, whereas the bureau's internal position was that "with Oswald's background we should have had a stop on his passport, particularly since we did not know definitely whether or not he had any intelligence assignments at that time."[1] Exactly what the FBI knew or suspected about Oswald merits careful investigation.

It would also be helpful if a national news organization would lend its weight to a Freedom of Information Act request for the FBI's crucial *pre*assassination Oswald files. The celebrated 98,000 pages come almost entirely from the FBI's postassassination investigations. The documents filed before November 22, 1963, are few but potentially very important if people in the bureau had any reason to suspect that Oswald had intelligence connections (or, as some other critics have speculated, a possible informant relationship with the FBI itself). Samuel Stern, a junior lawyer on the

1. *Critic Peter Dale Scott, in his* Crime and Cover-Up *(Berkeley: Westworks, 1977), has offered this concise analysis of the FBI memo: "Logically, Gale's [the memo-writer's]* judgment must refer to U.S. *intelligence assignments, the only assignments which could have mitigated, rather than strengthened, the need to keep track of Oswald's movements. The adverbial qualifiers (*definitely . . . at that time*) suggest that the FBI had been receiving indefinite intimations that Oswald at some time had had such assignments."*

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Warren Commission staff, drafted a comprehensive request for those files in March 1964 (asking for "all FBI files on Oswald through November 22, 1963, whether maintained at headquarters or at any field office . . . including internal memoranda, teletypes, and other instructions or communications between FBI activities [*sic*], internal surveillance reports on any surveillance conducted involving Oswald, internal mail cover reports on Oswald, and the like"). Stern's request was deleted in the final version of the letter sent to Hoover, and the Warren Commission never saw the preassassination files. Critics have sought the file for years under the Freedom of Information Act, and Representative Christopher Dodd of the House judiciary subcommittee on civil and constitutional rights (and now also of the House assassination committee) has asked for it as well. But the FBI has so far shown no eagerness to comply. A forceful request from a major newspaper or TV network might succeed where these individuals have failed.

REPRESENTATIVE DODD'S INABILITY TO obtain FBI files is a grievous example of the practical limits on congressional power in confrontation with the federal bureaucracy. The media could play an important role in strengthening congressional demands for historically important information, but so far they have treated congressional interest in the Kennedy assassination with little sympathy. When the House voted more than a year ago to establish a committee to look into the assassinations of President Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, the press gave the largest share of its coverage to the ensuing conflicts between the committee and its controversial original chief counsel, Richard Sprague. Since replacing Sprague with a less colorful organized-crime specialist, the committee has prudently sought no headlines and promised no smoking guns—hinting instead that a slow, discreet investigation is in order. As is so often the case, a great deal will depend on the quality of the staff work in this investigation. As we hope for the best in the staff, we must voice some concern about the composition of the House committee itself. The Black Caucus, whose initial interest spearheaded the reopening of the Kennedy and King investigations, is well represented. California Democrat Yvonne Burke may be the most open-minded member on the committee. But Burke is balanced by archconservative Sam Devine, an Ohio Republican who has predicted that the investigation will trace the Kennedy assassination plot to the feet of Fidel Castro. The committee as a whole could turn out to be very unstable once it is asked to pass judgment on reports and evaluations from the staff; it could easily split into two factions—each of which represents only a small minority in the overall congressional picture.

Despite these difficulties, the potential importance of the congressional investigation cannot be overstated. Without the power to subpoena witnesses and compel testimony, citizens and the press are forever denied answers that Congress can get. The 1976 Senate report by Pennsylvania Republican Richard Schweiker and Colorado Democrat Gary Hart demonstrated very dramatically what Congress can do to open up the Kennedy case. (Schweiker and Hart have asked the Senate's permanent intelligence oversight committee—chaired by Daniel Inouye of Hawaii—to follow up the leads they uncovered. The new committee has been silent on the subject, but there are indications that members of the committee's staff are pursuing some aspects of the JFK case.)

THE GREAT CONTRIBUTION OF THE Schweiker-Hart Report was its documented exposure of what the CIA didn't tell the Warren Commission and its detailed account of the international context of the Kennedy assassination, in terms of the then-current covert plots against Castro. While there is no certainty that this context was directly relevant to the events in Dallas, there is no doubt that the Warren Commission's ignorance of the anti-Castro plots influenced its investigation and that the CIA's Cuban secrets help to explain the agency's failure to cooperate fully with the commission.

The most fascinating story in the Schweiker-Hart narration of the Cuban connection is that of Rolando Cubela Secades, to whom the CIA gave the code name AMLASH. Cubela was a student leader who attained the rank of major in Castro's guerrilla army in the late fifties. When the rebels took power, Cubela became a high official in the Ministry of the Interior. Almost everything else we know of Cubela's subsequent activities is shrouded in ambiguity. Agent or double agent? That is the haunting question.

The CIA says its contact with Cubela began about the time that President Kennedy took office in 1961. According to the agency, the man they called AMLASH wanted to talk about defecting, but they wanted him to stay in Cuba, where he could provide information and play a role in any future attempts to overthrow the Castro regime. Following the October 1962 missile crisis, nearly a year went by without any known CIA contact with AMLASH. The administration had made a deal with the Soviet Union: Moscow withdrew its missiles, Washington would tolerate Castro. The details are obscure, but Kennedy undoubtedly did impose restrictions on the exile raids against Cuba from Florida. In the fall of 1963, Kennedy also initiated informal moves toward rapprochement with Castro via Ambassador William Atwood, a UN delegate who made contact with the Cuban mission in New York, and French reporter Jean Daniel, who met with the president before traveling to Havana in late October. The CIA reports that it shifted its emphasis in the summer of 1963 toward encouraging dissidents inside Cuba—in preference to the exiles. How much the agency and the White House were coordinating their Cuban policies is a matter of controversy.

In late summer 1963, the CIA renewed contact with AMLASH, who reportedly told them he was primarily interested in whether the United States would support a new invasion plan or an "inside job" to eliminate Castro. (On the second anniversary of the Bay of Pigs, Castro had charged publicly that the United States had shifted its strategy from invasion plans to assassination plots; this April 1963 speech was reported in the U.S. press but not noted in the Schweiker-Hart Report.) AMLASH's concerns were officially reported to CIA headquarters on September 7; on the same day an AP reporter quoted Castro as warning U.S. officials that "if they are aiding terrorist plans to eliminate Cuban leaders, they themselves will not be safe." Inside the government, a memo was prepared on how Castro might be likely to respond to the rash of covert activities being planned for Cuba, but "attacks on U.S. officials" within the United States were considered so unlikely that this option was not even on the final list. More meetings were set up with AMLASH; no matter who first raised the idea of assassination, the contact with AMLASH continued on that basis.

AMLASH soon upped the ante: He demanded a personal meeting with the president's brother—Attorney General

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A minimal hope is that the investigation will shed light on a number of covert forces in America that have literally gotten away with murder.

Robert Kennedy—as an assurance that the U.S. government was firmly behind the policies under discussion. The CIA didn't pass the invitation on to the attorney general. Instead, the socially prominent Washington lawyer Desmond Fitzgerald—the secret head of the CIA's Special Affairs Staff (effectively the agency's Cuba desk at that time)—met AMLASH on October 29, introducing himself as Bobby Kennedy's personal representative. At least two of Fitzgerald's colleagues at the CIA advised him not to go. The chief of counterintelligence of Fitzgerald's own Special Affairs Staff thought Cubela's "bona fides were subject to question"—in other words, he might be reporting back to Castro. Double agent or not, AMLASH was known to talk too much. Security around his contacts with the CIA was so bad that an FBI informer reported to the bureau on October 10 that Cubela was meeting with the CIA. Despite the warnings and danger signs, Fitzgerald used no disguise for his fateful meeting with Cubela; his only fig leaf was an alias.

AMLASH told the putative Kennedy emissary that he wanted "technical support"—like a high-powered rifle with telescopic sight—not just approval for his policies. The two CIA agents present at the meeting have given opposite versions of Fitzgerald's reply to the request, but by November 19 Fitzgerald told the CIA case officer he could tell AMLASH that rifles, telescopic sights, and explosives would be provided. The day before, Fitzgerald had sent AMLASH another signal—by way of President Kennedy himself. On November 18, Kennedy gave a speech in Miami—the heartland of the exiles—in which he described the Castro government as a "small band of conspirators" whose removal would ensure U.S. support for progressive goals in Cuba. Fitzgerald reportedly helped draft the speech, and an internal memo of the CIA quoted in the Schweiker-Hart Report confirms that the CIA intended the speech to signal the dissidents in Cuba that the United States would support a coup.

As Kennedy was being shot in Dallas, Fitzgerald and the CIA case officer met with AMLASH, on November 22, 1963, assuring him that he would get his rifles and telescopic sights. They also gave him a ball-point pen rigged with a hypodermic needle so fine that its victim would not notice its insertion, advising AMLASH to buy a bottle of Blackleaf-40—a commercial poison lethal even in tiny doses. When they left the meeting, news of the Kennedy assassination was on the wires around the world.

Assassination plots involving AMLASH and the CIA continued into 1965. In June of that year, a Cuban exile labeled "A" in the Schweiker-Hart Report contacted the Immigration and Naturalization Service and talked about the AMLASH operation. "A" himself had been active in New Orleans in 1963—the time when Oswald made contact with anti-Castro Cubans and operated his one-member Fair Play for Cuba Committee. It is conceivable that "A" himself had contact with Oswald and likely that they met some of the same people. But the CIA wasn't worried about the possible Oswald link. What "A" exposed in 1965 was simply the indiscretion of AMLASH. At a joint FBI-CIA debriefing, "A" told how much he knew about the CIA-AMLASH plot. The CIA terminated the operation, cabling its stations: "Convincing proof that entire AMLASH group insecure and that further contact with key members of group constitutes a menace to CIA operations." Another CIA memo stated: "The AMLASH circle is wide and each new friend of whom we learn seems to have knowledge of plan." Among other things, the information from "A" raised the possibility that underworld figures involved in earlier anti-Castro plots had also learned of the AMLASH scenario.

In February 1966 AMLASH, a.k.a. Cubela, was arrested in Havana in connection with an assassination plot involving an FAL automatic rifle with telescopic sight. He was convicted and sentenced to death—but Castro himself intervened to commute the sentence to 20 years.

ALTHOUGH MUCH ABOUT AMLASH REMAINS a mystery, we know for certain that the AMLASH plot is a secret the CIA was not about to share with the Warren Commission. On November 24, the Mexico CIA station sent headquarters a list of all known contacts of certain Soviet personnel in Mexico City to help headquarters assess the significance of Oswald's contact with the Soviets there in October. AMLASH's real name was on the list. Unfortunately, there is neither a documentary record nor a personal recollection of what happened when that list reached headquarters. According to the Schweiker-Hart Report: "Had routine procedure been followed, that name would have been checked in Agency files. Operational information, i.e., details of CIA plots with AMLASH to assassinate Castro, would not have been routinely provided. The decision to provide such information would have been made by Fitzgerald or Helms. The AMLASH case officer can recall no discussion about connections between AMLASH and the assassination of President Kennedy."

There is no evidence that any high official of the CIA concluded that Oswald was a Castro agent. The Schweiker-Hart Committee asked AMLASH's case officer directly why he didn't associate President Kennedy's assassination by a pro-Castro activist with his own involvement in the AMLASH operation. According to the report, the case officer replied that "he does not know to this day that Oswald had any pro-Castro leanings." The report emphasized that the committee "has seen no evidence that Fidel Castro or others in the Cuban government plotted President Kennedy's assassination in retaliation for U.S. operations against Cuba" and specifically added that it "found no conclusive evidence that Castro was aware of AMLASH's 1963 dealings with the CIA." The true significance of the Cuba angle seems to be that the mere mention of Cuba put the CIA on red alert. Outsiders who tried to pursue the Cuban connection were warned of "serious repercussions" and politely discouraged on grounds of "national security"—leaving some with the impression that Oswald's links to Castro were being covered up when the CIA was actually guarding its own anti-Castro secrets. Not only did the CIA volunteer nothing to the Warren Commission about its Cuban plots, the commis-

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sion itself lacked curiosity about Oswald's ties. Commission member Allen Dulles, CIA director during many anti-Castro plots, was mute. The CIA personnel who worked directly with the commission were experts in the KGB and Soviet matters. Apparently the commission put no questions to the CIA about the anti-Castro groups whose members encountered Oswald in New Orleans.

The limits of what Schweiker and Hart uncovered were determined by their narrow mandate: They investigated only intelligence agencies' activities in relation to the Kennedy assassination. The current House committee has no such limits on its mandate; thus it has the opportunity to break the case wide open—coupled with the unavoidable duty to confront the toughest questions on which the Warren Commission's leading critics have never reached a consensus. Though there is wide agreement that individuals other than Oswald were involved in the Kennedy assassination, there are sharp differences over whether Oswald was a guilty member of a murder conspiracy or an innocent fall guy. And there are further differences as to just who Oswald was—and for whom he may have been working. In the simplest schematization, there are half-a-dozen logical possibilities to explain Oswald's identity: He could have been a lone nut, either guilty or innocent; he could have been a conspirator of the left (such as a Castro or KGB agent), either guilty or innocent (framed by plotters who knew his leftist ties); or he could have been a conspirator of the right (such as a CIA asset or anti-Castro plotter), either guilty or innocent (framed by plotters who knew his government or rightist links).[2]

THERE IS AN AMPLE BODY OF REASONABLY well researched literature covering most of these logical possibilities. The case for Oswald's innocence can be found in the early books by Mark Lane, Harold Weisberg, and Sylvia Meagher, and more recent works by George O'Toole and Howard Roffman. The case for Oswald's guilt still rests on the Warren Report, but his associations on the left (principally with the Soviets) are the subject of a book by Michael Eddowes, and his associations on the right are explored in several studies of Jim Garrison's investigations in New Orleans, as well as Robert Sam Anson's 1975 paperback. Regrettably, all these books are often discounted and dismissed in the press along with the *National Enquirer*'s annual announcement that the case has been solved. Fortunately, the House committee has recognized the difference between conspiracy kooks and real experts who have studied the Kennedy assassination with the meticulous care normally reserved for an academic discipline.

Last September the committee gathered a small group of the top experts for a secret Washington brainstorming session. Those attending included several of the authors just named, a college professor whose early book used the now-famous Zapruder film to challenge the single-bullet theory, two Berkeley researchers who have specialized in the post-assassination cover-up, and representatives of the Washington groups that have lobbied most effectively in support of the congressional investigation. Secret contact with the critics enables committee staffers to test their new leads and hypotheses against the expertise of the ranking critics, who in some cases could cite chapter and verse (or document and file number) to indicate that an apparently new story had been around a long time and had led past investigators up a blind alley. In other cases, they could add details that might make a new lead more worthwhile to pursue. And last of all, they were collectively put on the spot to tell the committee what they would do if the tables were turned and the citizen-critics were running the official investigation.

THE CRITICS' SPECULATIVE ANSWERS TO the question, "Where do we go from here?," offer the committee a range of informed choices: Stick to a critical examination of the physical evidence; zero in on Oswald's possible connections with U.S. intelligence agencies (and explore the unusual activities of various Army Intelligence people in Dallas on November 22, 1963); concentrate on Oswald's defection to the Soviet Union (and explore whether an Oswald impostor could have been sent into Russia by the CIA or back to America by the KGB); focus on Jack Ruby and his demonstrable links to organized crime; or—by analogy with Watergate—stick to the cover-up (where the Senate investigators were already so successful) and hope that it will lead back to the crime itself.

It is a good sign that the House committee has called upon the citizen-critics at all, but much will depend on the long-term liaison between congressional staff and the experts (or *which* experts the staff chooses to rely on the most). While it seems wise for the House investigation to avoid the limelight, a secret investigation also has many pitfalls. The Schweiker-Hart Senate Committee held closed hearings and produced a good report, but researchers should now have access to the transcripts of those hearings. It will be ironic if the Warren Commission appears less secretive about its hearings than the congressional committees are about theirs.

It is hard to be wholly optimistic about the prospects of solving the real-life political thriller that the Kennedy assassination has become. The stakes are large, the motives of the amateur detectives and official investigators are diverse and complex, and many of the known events occurred in the murky underworld of international intrigue, where every fact may mean the opposite of the obvious interpretation. (In the extreme case, there are those who interpret every piece of evidence suggesting Oswald's links to U.S. intelligence as further proof that the KGB has penetrated the CIA—planting false trails here, infiltrating double agents there. This is, of course, logically possible, but the assumption makes any rational analysis impossible; obviously, without any compelling evidence to support this thesis, such a line of inquiry would be an exercise in paranoia.) The minimal hope is that the effort to understand the Kennedy assassination and the official secrets surrounding it will shed needed light on a number of covert forces at large in American society that have literally gotten away with murder—if not Kennedy's, then plenty of others. One needn't assume a solitary conspiracy underlying all the unsolved murders and unquiet assassinations—the Kennedy brothers, their enemy Jimmy Hoffa, their sometime ally Martin Luther King, the CIA's patriotic would-be assassins, Sam Giancana and John Roselli, and CIA foe Orlando Letelier. The point is that all these deaths mean something for American politics, and our ignorance of that meaning puts an area of politics outside accountable control. We may never know what really happened in Dallas in 1963, but the search for that knowledge should not be abandoned as long as it is leading us to other politically significant truths. ❏

2. *Some critics speculate, for example, that if Mafia elements engineered the assassination, they might have been happy to frame Oswald and pin the blame on either the left or the right.*

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Humanist, radical, his own man

Paul Goodman: Mentor to a generation

MICHAEL ROSSMAN

ON MY DESK NOW ARE THE BOOKS BY Paul Goodman that have touched my life—one text each on psychology, education, youth in society, urban community planning, political philosophy (as if the single subject of all could so be divided!); collections of public letters, of essays, of his journals from "a useless time," concerned also with the natural world, with art, sexuality, love, the spirit, and their associated gifts and pains; and two novels, three books of poems, and a collection of stories, each expressing integrally his concerns.*

He touched my life as he touched my generation, our time: persistently, with blunt grace and small hope of heed, always with more than we could readily digest—some deep integrity of vision and purpose as a social man, more radical than each particular flood of his opinions and ideas. In each field of his writing, his contribution was significant; in none alone was he a truly major figure (save perhaps for a passing time in education). Yet overall he was a major presence in our time—and is still—for the particular character and spirit bodied forth through all his work. And for some of my generation he was more—a parent of a rare sort, deeply needed.

As many did, I found his writing rich in those bell-like passages that ring in one's mind for years. I recall coming upon *Growing Up Absurd* (1960) in college in 1962. We had yet to venture our first angry revolts against paternalistic institutions, or to dream of a revitalized and affirmative culture, when I read the indictment that formed the basis of this text, and indeed of most of his social writings:

> I intend to show . . . that our abundant society is at present simply deficient in many of the most elementary objective opportunities and worth-while goals that could make growing up possible. It is lacking in enough man's work. It is lacking in honest public speech, and people are not taken seriously. It is lacking in the opportunity to be useful. It thwarts aptitude and creates stupidity. It corrupts ingenuous patriotism. It corrupts the fine arts. It shackles science. It dampens animal ardor. It discourages the religious convictions of Justification and Vocation, and it dims the sense that there is a Creation. It has no Honor. It has no Community. . . .
>
> These are the things that *everbody* knows. And nevertheless the Governor of New York says, "We must give these young men a sense of belonging."

Here I met the character consistent in Goodman's writings—the quality of his prose, his practiced and subtle craft of saying plainly what is, in a language yet his own; the scope of his concerns, and his refusal to segregate them from each other. But what struck me more deeply was his very stance, that it was *appropriate* to say such fundamental and obvious things about our condition—not as a yawp of adolescent pain, but as the ground of serious analysis that might lead us beyond them, while returning us ever to the meaning of our lives.

Soon after, my friends enlivened our parties with experiments in Gestalt perception, tales of beating off in pillows, full body jerking in release; and introduced me to *Gestalt Therapy* (1951) and Goodman's other psychological writings. Here I found, in its most private and scientific focus, the concern for the wellsprings of psychic and physical vitality, a concern that permeates and illuminates all his more social work. Yet the stance was the same. "No, you're not crazy," he was telling us again. "It's okay to see what you see, feel what you feel; it's useful to express it." For person as for society, his modes of analysis and therapy were grounded in the present moment, in the existential truths of our experience.

Such consonances rang throughout his work, or rather were the fibers of its integrity. Thus, scanning the urban scene, he saw its ground as figure, and with his brother in 1947, in *Communitas* (rev. ed., 1960) proposed banning the private automobile from Manhattan. As with so many of his

* *Of these the fifth is* Drawing the Line *(1962), and the last* Adam and His Works *(1968); the rest are mentioned in the text.*

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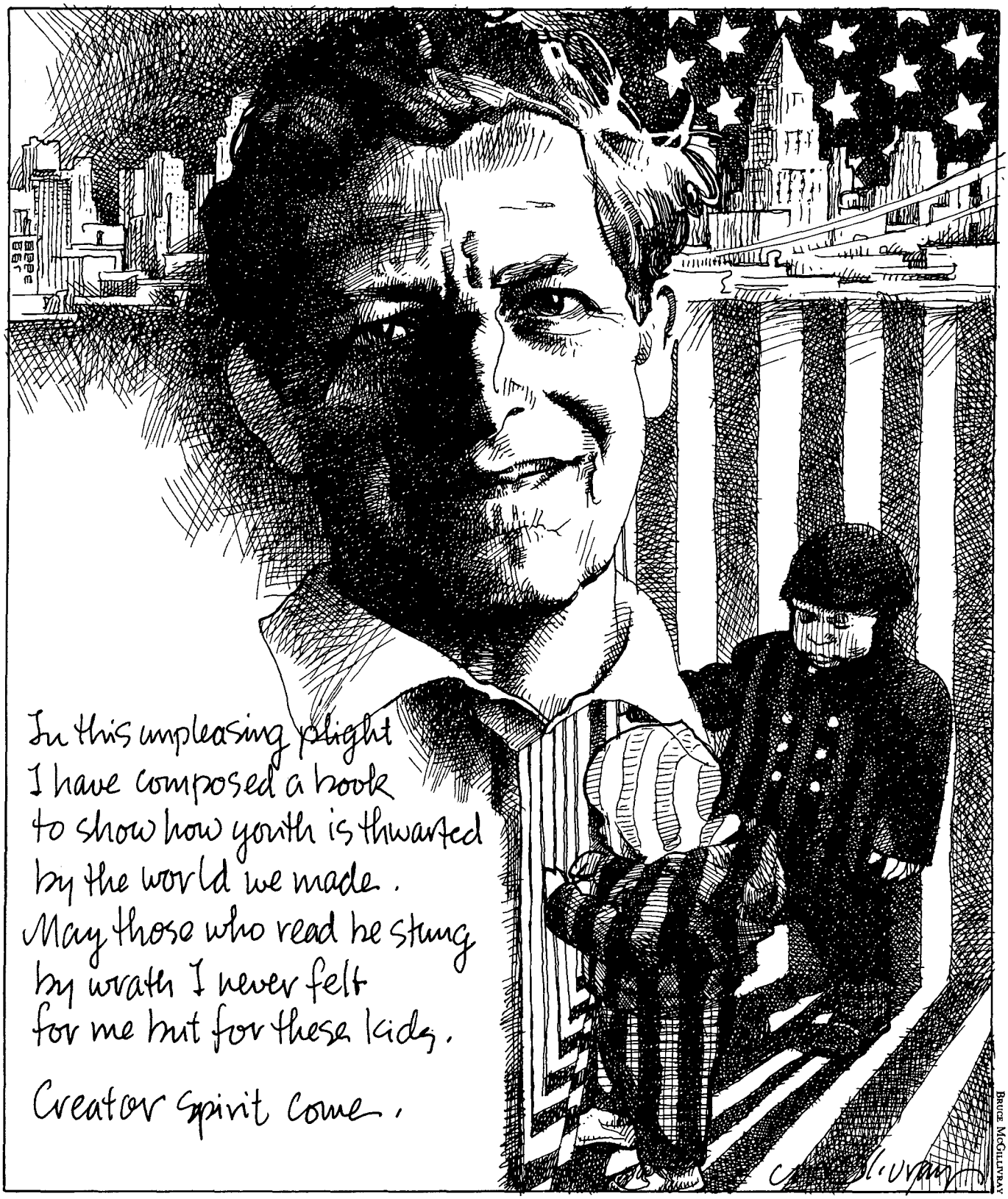
In this unpleasing plight
I have composed a book
to show how youth is thwarted
by the world we made.
May those who read be stung
by wrath I never felt
for me but for these kids.
Creator Spirit come.
BRUCE MCGILLIVRAY

proposals, time—or rather the slow contagions of attitude that he helped to initiate—has dimmed the sheer surprise of this one, made its pertinence clearer, and brought us not noticeably nearer to its realization.

I cite it here as emblem of the self he brought consistently to play in his social critique. He was the radical child, questioning with fresh eyes the assumptions undergirding massive constructs of social experience; he was equally the therapist, seeking the key feasible intervention. Indeed the title under which he later included this proposal describes the pieces as *Utopian Essays and Practical Proposals* (1962)—not one *or* the other, but both simultaneously. It was this stubborn practicality—his insistence on grounding vision, like critique, in the real situation, in the actually possible—that gave his public dreaming its bite upon the time and its hold upon our imaginations.

In this vein, as the massive urban school systems grew unworkable, Goodman proposed (in the *New York Review of*

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In each field he was significant, though not a major figure. But the character and spirit of his work, and a deep integrity of vision and purpose, touched me and my generation.

Books) their reconfiguration as it might be begun in his own city, in small neighborhood facilities and arrangements that made parental participation and local self-determination the organic concomitants of community education rather than merely rhetorical slogans. Here, as usual, his simple inspiration was no isolated potshot, but rather the corollary of a well-developed line of thought and a full social perspective. In *Compulsory Mis-education* (1966) he had applied the social-developmental critique of *Growing Up Absurd* specifically to public education; in *The Community of Scholars* (1966) he had deepened it by taking the colleges as "the only important face-to-face, self-governing communities still active in our modern society," and arguing the historical case and present prospectus for their revitalization on this basis.

SUCH WRITINGS HELPED TO INSPIRE THE movement for student-initiated educational reform that stirred the campuses of the late sixties; and it was fitting that Goodman found himself in turn, for a time, playing some real version of a role of his dreams, employed as an independent scholar by my friends in San Francisco who had organized the first successful "free university." Though we took him as an "educator," for lack of a better title, and because he was indeed our mentor, the triumph involved was political, as were his essential teachings.

For Goodman was not flip in calling *The Community of Scholars* "a little treatise in anarchist theory . . . [after] Kropotkin." Though only in his formal political writings did he dwell on this theme explicitly, it is the ground of intention that unifies all his social writings. His grasp of his own role as a modern bearer and shaper of this tradition left him little need to defend it as such, as he inquired into what might be the perceptual and artistic modes, the intimate psychologies and therapies, the orderings of urban civilization that might be useful in developing self-governing communities of self-governing persons—not only democratic and libertarian, but exploring anew all the psychic and social territory colonized by the state's operations.

Yet to describe the spectrum of Goodman's teachings does not catch the rarer and more integral way in which he taught our time. The lesson lay less in his conclusions than in the mode, the stance, the self of inquiry. In a word, though Goodman was often dismissed as just an original thinker, he was something deeper—*his own man,* anarchist to the core. Not simply "not the state's," but stubbornly uninstitutionalized, against the social grain of the age itself; and committed thereby to making his own versions of sense and moral meaning, each time arguing them anew from what he could grasp of first principles and the rich heritage of our culture.

It is this knotty spirit, this self-owned integrity at the perpetual task, that bites at one from every page of his work—in the intimate textures of his prose and verse; in the grand scope of *The Empire City* (1964), his tormented hymn to mid-century urban life, which Norman Podhoretz admired as "more extreme in its stubborn individuality than any [novel] in a long, long time"; in his observations as a lay therapist, citizen, and seeker of sex; in the potent idiosyncracies of his attentions and deductions; and in those thoughts and allegiances of his which remained partly indigestible by every current whose fancy he caught, saving him from the role of patron saint.

AND IT IS THE FULLNESS IN WHICH HE conceived himself, as his own good man, which made him more than just another sharp individualist on the make—which gave his bite its force and him his stature. For he knew himself as an animal of nature, throbbing with vital energies not to be repressed; as an agent in the mysteries of the Spirit; as a cognitive and emotive being capable of self-insight and self-governance; as a social being, a citizen responsible for each scale of community from dyad to the whole; as a craftsman in art and in intellect, transforming his culture's heritage. Each dimension actively claimed his energy and allegiance; each in turn became a fundamental ground of his expression in the world. He did not manage quite to express them all in each single piece he wrote, but he was always trying—not for ideology's sake, but as his way of being in the world.

In this light Goodman was a rare father to my political generation. During an age when the landscape and our imaginations were impoverished, he modeled for us a way of being as a political man. He said that it was possible to be, not a party-member, but an autonomous citizen of revolutionary tradition; that it was possible to digest Marx with respect in a larger understanding of the conditions and relations of human production; that it was proper to see each dimension of our being as a fundamental ground and determinant of our political condition in the whole, useful to sink one's roots in each consciously, and necessary to speak in one's own voice.

His model was not an ideal to imitate, but an example—graced with enough cantankerousness, weakness and contradiction to be real—of what ways of growing up as whole political persons, as full social beings, might be possible and make sense. It gave us a great permission to find ourselves in the moment, which we were mostly too timid or rash to use well. But if, from this chaotic age in which swell so many diverse currents of politicized thought and action (several through his efforts), there in time condense among us new models of political wo/manhood appropriate to the situation, Goodman's act will no longer seem so sui generis or merely ornamental; and his parental influence will be then more clear.

One more orthodox grace of his political integrity bears mention. Though Goodman's work is rich in theory and theorizing—so much so that it forms in a sense most of the

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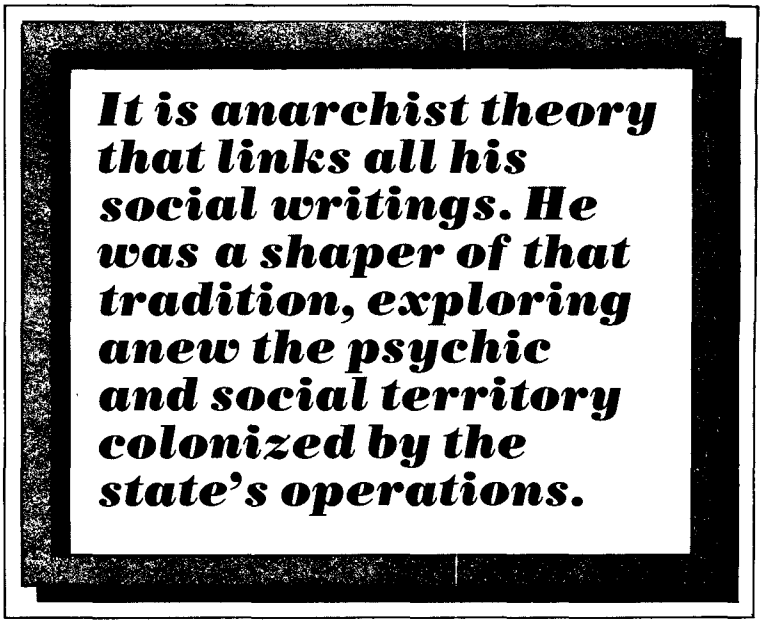
stuff of his stories and novels as well—this arises always from particular problems of practice, is phrased in their terms, and returns to express itself through them. In this regard his journal *Five Years* (1969) and his subsequent flurry of public letters and reviews, *The Society I Live In Is Mine* (1962), are of a kind with his more focused works of literary and social critique, and are as meaningful, despite or because of their grab-bag quality. *Five Years* is so because it shows Goodman in the pits, in a double sense. "I wrote this book when I had no one else to write for or to talk to," he says, in a "useless time"—and it is candid in revealing his self-pity as he struggled with the blues, the fruitlessness he felt in his career, his sex-life, his aging. And, simultaneously, inseparably, the book shows him in the pits of praxis, transmuting the crude ore of experience into ideas to be applied—exposing him in the intimate act of making sense as he accumulated the drifts of thought that would cohere in *Growing Up Absurd*.

As for *The Society I Live In Is Mine*, only here and in the brief reprint credits prefacing his other books does one get a sense of the actual enmeshment of Goodman and his writings in the practices of the time. By letter, by proposal, at hearings, on commissions, in public forums, in the streets, with reason he besieged the president and every lesser order of civic and professional official and spokesman, as a proper citizen of each community he took as his. In that he was a teacher, too, he brought his researches from print to life, not only in this way but on the faculty of several colleges; as a lecturer at many more; at conferences and conclaves of many sorts, wherever would abide him. And though for much of his life much of his work never found print, by virtue of its individuality and the time's tempers, from the time of my adolescence in the New Left till his death shortly after the Movement fell apart, Goodman's articles were powerfully present in the progressive journals of politics and culture that nourished our minds.

His engagement in these three streams of discourse weaves throughout all his writing, his poetry as impartially as the rest, providing much of its occasion, accounting for much of its tone. To see it thus is to see Goodman in a light I have skipped over—as a true *man of letters*. The role is rare in our age, and doubly so for the remarkably full and consistent way in which he fleshed it out. Yet also, I think, it is different neither in kind nor in content from the roles of educator and of political man, which he similarly fulfilled; for he operated in a realm where the distinctions among these roles dissolve.

If I have neglected the literary emphasis, the blunt fact that a third or more of his published work is in novels, stories, plays, and poems, and that he wanted, I think, first to be remembered as an artist rather than as an artisan, this is perhaps proportional to his literary influence on my generation and his own; and in his novels' case is as much a reflection of their character and my own as of their quality. Reading *Making Do* (1963) and *Empire City* (1959) at a time when I still looked for the usual literary graces and a kind of romanticizing of our condition, which Goodman was neither good at nor approved, I found their images of the struggles of our lives to be meaner and plainer than I cared then to read of or to face in my own—and indeed, I don't know that anyone has yet done for my generation the story of a war and its aftermath that Goodman did for his.

Also I found their forthrightness about homosexuality unsettling, both from my own anxieties and because it seemed then (as it would not have, had I seen him as littérateur only rather than as a political man) an extraneous aberration, a nagging distraction to my interests and, or so it


It is anarchist theory that links all his social writings. He was a shaper of that tradition, exploring anew the psychic and social territory colonized by the state's operations.

appeared, his own. Such attitudes as mine were, of course, themselves among the cruel distractions he continually faced, and no doubt kept the candidness of his pen somewhat in check beyond his fictions and journals. Only on rereading him do I now appreciate how broadly and consistently his more objective writings still managed to concern themselves with Eros, with uncolonized sexuality, with manly love, with their social preconditions—a theme as integral as any I have named him by. Though he died before gay liberation got well under way, that movement—male and female alike, despite the predominantly male focus and the often sexist phrasings of some of his work—and the general androgeny that beckons beyond may well claim a piece of Goodman as forebear (though he would surely have declined paternity of the latter).

AS FOR GOODMAN'S POEMS, I HAD NO such guards up. I have always liked plain stuff *Homespun of Oatmeal Gray* (1970), as he titled his last collection; and admired besides the enormous discipline involved in his crafting, from so deep and complex a perspective on the general madness of life, those measured lines of simple speech which poetry's commissars dismissed as pedestrian. In *Hawkweed* (1967) and *The Lordly Hudson and Other Poems* (1962), too, his poems reflect the fullness of his concerns, private as public, and how it felt to bear them in rejoicing and lament; and it is to his poems most often of his work that I return, as history and my flesh make me ready for their meanings, as if he were a father still.

Near the end there appeared, to my segment of Goodman's broad family, through the *New Schools Exchange* newsletter (Oct. 31, 1971), between one heart attack and his last one, his suite of "Poems Bed-Ridden," to share his goodbye to his body, his dead and living loves, the world. His last touch on our lives was as pure and sure as the classical Chinese activist-scholar-poet tradition it echoed; but what brought me to tears was the voice I had heard from him throughout, there encoded less as epitaph than as blessing:

I am obsessed by the plain facts:
writing them literally down
is all the poetry I can. ❑

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NATURE HEALS: The Psychological Essays of Paul Goodman, edited by Taylor Stoehr. Free Life Editions, 41 Union Square West, New York, N.Y. 10003. 259 pp., $11.95.

The ways of nature

GEORGE DENNISON

*IN RETROSPECT, PAUL GOOD-*man seems better than ever: We sorely miss such a voice today. He was the preeminent social critic of the late fifties and the sixties, but the truth behind that somewhat absurd term is that he was humane and wise.

The essays in *Nature Heals*, which span a period of more than 25 years, present a fascinating picture of Goodman's development. His important themes appear at the very beginning and persist to the end. Preciosity and mere cleverness are shorn away. There is much evidence of suffering and endurance. Principles that appear first in fiercely polemical forms end in the commodious attitudes of a man who is not afraid to keep enemies and suffers no need to despise them. And all along there is a visible creation of self, role, identity, and of practical labors (critic, therapist, etc.) as well as a body of thought. Goodman's late essayistic style, although it is not without faults and lapses, is remarkable in recent American letters. It is sometimes colloquial, sometimes grave and lofty; it is impeccable in its discriminations and so swift and sharp in its identifications and references as to be at times uncanny.

The essays of the late sixties are acutely analytical, but by this time Goodman is so secure in his meanings that he strikes notes of sweetness and pride, and sometimes of hilarity. These qualities appear most informally in "The Politics of Being Queer," an essay of such candid good sense that one looks aside at other works, even those of a near-great like Genêt, with a new awareness of the portentousness and insularity with which these themes have been treated. "When I give talks to the Mattachine Society," Goodman writes, "my invariable sermon is to ally with all other libertarian groups and liberation movements, since freedom is indivisible. What we need is not defiant pride and self-consciousness, but social space to live and breathe." There are passages in this essay that are, on the one hand, nothing but the conversation of an unusual man, truthful and humorous. On the other hand, they are without precedent in American writing. Goodman goes on to talk of politics, education, schools, literature. His being homosexual, he writes, "seems to inspire me to want a more elementary humanity, wilder, less structured, more variegated. . . . That is, my plight has given energy to my anarchism, utopianism, and Gandhianism."

ELLIOT KRELOFF

Except for the taped interviews and selections from notebooks, "The Politics of Being Queer" is the most informal essay of the present collection. Yet its insights, concerns, and recommendations are all of a piece with Goodman's most formal addresses to educators and psychoanalysts. This unification of public and private things was one of the triumphs of his life. Whatever its peculiarities, it gave him a centeredness and freedom that few people achieve. And it was no mere intellectual matter. It required that he take many a costly stand on public issues, lose many a friend, much income, and opportunities for publishing and teaching. But the lived quality of his thought gave him subjects of wide relevance and a voice of philosophical authority. Now that the period is receding, Goodman is beginning to emerge as a discernible historical figure. Taylor Stoehr, who was his friend, has selected and arranged the materials of these volumes to stress the unity of life and work. His insightful, highly detailed biographical introduction—which is perhaps a foretaste of the long biography under way—is superb.

THE EARLIEST ESSAYS IN Nature Heals were written in the mid-forties, a time of enormous activity for Goodman. His reaction to the Second World War had been as intense as D. H. Lawrence's to the First, and he needed work upon work to discover the ethics and politics of his revulsion. The role of psychology in these investigations can be seen especially in his early defenses of Wilhelm Reich.

Reich held that the social causes of neurosis demanded a social-political role for the analyst. He believed that the human orgasm served an immediate physiological function, and that behind every psychoneurosis could be found an actual neurosis, or anxiety, brought on by instinctual, especially sexual, deprivation. This last idea, which had been Freud's, was carried by Reich to the wonderfully logical conclusion that the cure for sexual deprivation was sex, and not mere insight. When Goodman presented these ideas to American readers in reviews and essays, he stressed that continence in itself was damaging to the young, and urged that teachers provide sexual facilities for children and adolescents, and step out of the way. These recommendations came at a time when progressive educators were teaching that Sex Is Beautiful. The Goodman-Reich defense of Ugly Sex shocked them deeply. In "The Political Meaning of Some Recent Revisions of Freud" (1945), which served Goodman almost as a manifesto (as did much that he wrote at this time), he combined his praise of Reich with an attack on the assimilationists, Karen Horney and Erich Fromm, whom he saw as technocrats of a nature-less, spiritless *sociolatry*.

Reich had been drummed out of the psychoanalytic movement for insisting on the political meaning of psychoanalysis, and out of the Communist Party for insisting on the sexual meaning of politics. Goodman took up both positions and began to suffer accordingly. At this time he made enemies who remained faithful for decades.

Reich was a link between insight and conduct, psychology and politics.

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Goodman respected him, too, as a pioneer. But it would be a mistake to overestimate the importance of Reich for Goodman. Goodman thought his theory of nature simplistic, and believed that his ideas of self and neurosis ignored the dialectical vitality these phenomena possessed in life. Freud far more than Reich influenced his thought, and the psychoanalytic habit of mind antedated the war by many years. His earliest stories had been psychological. Looking back in 1965 on his apparently complex career, he indicated its unity when he wrote:

I am a writer, and certainly the writer must present his own life-view . . . rather than explore or impose a psychologist's theory. But it happens that my life-view, the way I do see things, and therefore the way I write, has been immensely qualified by Freud, Sullivan, Wilhelm Reich, Karl Abraham, Rank, and Groddeck. Presumably these irrelevant theories have become second nature to me; they are not theories, but part of my growth in experience. So I *see* the psychosomatic, the fantasy, the unexpressed interpersonal act or avoidance, almost as I see red and blue.

Goodman believed that the human animal seeks its own good and does not need to be constrained by external authority. Of each innovation he asked whether it had to exist at all, whether nonintervention—which amounts to trusting nature—was not the preferable course.

GOODMAN WAS ALMOST 40 when he collaborated with Fritz Perls in the writing of *Gestalt Therapy* (1949–1950). With his brother Percival he had written *Communitas*, destined to become a classic of city planning; he had written the first three volumes of *The Empire City*, the third part of which he had just printed at his own expense; he had written the stories of *The Break-Up of Our Camp* and *The Fact of Life*; had written *Kafka's Prayer*, which drew heavily on Freud and his own Reichian therapy; had written the first version of *The Structure of Literature*, an extended bravura feat of Aristotelian structural analysis; had written the political and literary essays of *Art and Social Nature* . . . plus poetry, plays, uncollected essays, and unprinted stories and novels. He was a figure in the radical wing of the avant-garde, and although he was boycotted by the avant-Establishment around *Partisan Review*, he did in fact command more real praise than all but a few contributors (some of them Parisian) to that periodical.

There now occurred a grand synthesis of themes he had worked with for years. His labors on volume one of *Gestalt Therapy* seem to have been exclusively editorial. The second part, however, *Novelty, Excitement, and Growth*, although strongly indebted to ideas of Perls, was largely Goodman's own; in any event, it is of a kind and order to set it well apart from other productions of this school. While writing it he entered therapy with Lore Perls, who was not only a broadly experienced practitioner, but a cultivated and philosophically gifted woman. She became his friend and mentor, and provided guidance when he launched his own career as a lay therapist.

Stoehr has wisely included selections from this often difficult book, which was pivotal in Goodman's life. One discovers, as its theory unfolds, that it is not "value neutral" but radical and a search for value. The underlying concept is stated at once: "Experience occurs at the boundary between the organism and its environment"—and Goodman adds a thought that was Aristotle's and that remained centrally important: "It is the contact that is the simplest and first reality."

Goodman's philosophic training, which had been arduous and first-rate, is evident everywhere, not only in the synthesizing of several traditions, but also—and perhaps especially—in such structural insights as this:

. . . to put it in a way that must seem odd, the contact-boundary—for example, the sensitive skin—is not so much a part of the organism as it is essentially *the organ of a particular relation of the organism and the environment*. Primarily, as we shall soon try to show, this particular relation is *growth*.

In an important and peculiarly modern way *Novelty, Excitement, and Growth* served as an ethics for Goodman. The purpose of therapeutic method was to remove "blind spots," compulsions, trivial fears, and wasteful conflicts within the self. The hope of the therapist, however, was not merely to replace misery with good feeling, but to liberate a whole person independently possessed of the possibility of right action. There is a powerful ethical tendency in this book. One senses it always. The immediate concerns are usually self and nature, but the commonweal is never wholly out of sight. Goodman referred to this linking of therapy and ethics once in a fanciful way as recruiting the crew of the Argo. If each patient represented to some extent a rescue, and if the method was in that sense compassionate, the more important motive was that there be a crew . . . and more important still that there be an Argo. Goodman's familiar presence in the sixties was the public projection of functions he conceived and fulfilled at this time. He became the physician-philosopher of the immanent community.

THE ACT OF ANATOMIZING or analyzing anything is largely an intellectual act, yet close, responsive noticing over a wide range of detail implies concern, even passionate concern. Just this is one of the finest qualities of Goodman's prose. His style is abstract and analytical, yet it generates this quality of passionate caring, and vivifies life while it explicates it. Of the present essays, "Designing Pacifist Films," "The Psychology of Being Powerless," "The Children and Psychology," and "The Politics of Being Queer" are noteworthy. The masterpiece of the collection, however, is "Reflections of Racism, Spite, Guilt, and Non-Violence." It appeared in the *New York Review of Books* in 1968, a time of high-tempered and slogan-ridden factionalism. Important political truths were being obscured in all quarters. The Kerner report, which—in the somewhat fashionable terms of extreme black militancy—maintained that "white racism" was the cause of certain

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social and economic ills, had just come out. Goodman responded with this essay.

To account for the explosive mixture one does not need fancy new concepts like white racism; the old story of criminal neglect of social costs for private gain is more to the point . . . what is evident is a *general drive* to dispossess, control, and ignore human beings who are useless and bothersome, whether small farmers, displaced coalminers, the aged, the alienated young, the vastly increasing number of the insane . . . [or] unassimilable racial minorities.

After a brief psychological and historical description of racism, Goodman suggests that the dominant northern middle class is subject to maladies perhaps even more disastrous.

Meantime we must live with the immediate problem: what to *do* when some are hurting and others, who have power, don't care? *How* to make narrow, busy, self-righteous people understand that other people exist? It was exactly for this problem that Gandhi, A. J. Muste, and Martin Luther King devised and experimented with the strategy of active massive non-violent confrontation. . . . In my opinion, this is the only strategy that addresses all aspects of the situation. . . . We will have to live together in some community or other. How? In what community? We really do not know, but nonviolent conflict is the way to discover and invent it.

The terms Goodman uses in this essay are psychological. They are related structurally to remedial action, and they prevent the process of analysis from creating spurious archetypes. But in a larger sense the essay is political and seems actually to be one of the finest short commentaries of that decade.

SOMETHING SHOULD BE SAID of the title of this collection: *Nature Heals—natura sanat non medicus.* When Goodman is theorizing, as in the selections from *Gestalt Therapy*, this motto, or rather any action that might conceivably be harmonious with it, is conspicuously absent, but naturally so, since the motto applies precisely to the cessation of intervention. It was not really the motto of Goodman as a therapist per se, but an attitude discernible at all stages of his life. Its literary manifestations resembled Coleridge's belief in universal "fountains" of creativity that energized literary forms and were released by them. In Goodman's early political thought it was the belief that the human animal seeks its own good and does not need to be constrained to it by external authority. The same attitude was expressed later in his many versions of Reich's idea of organismic self-regulation. In *Communitas* it took the form of asking of each social innovation whether it needed to exist at all, that is, whether nonintervention—which amounts to trusting nature—were not the preferable course. *Natura sanat* is apt, certainly, for this collection of psychological writings, but it is worth saying (as Stoehr mentions in his introduction) that it was the poet-philosopher who handed on the motto to the therapist. ❑

DRAWING THE LINE: The Political Essays of Paul Goodman, edited by Taylor Stoehr. Free Life Editions, 272 pp., $11.95.

Freedom and community

LEWIS PERRY

THE LIVELIEST AND MOST inventive of the social critics who rose to prominence in the 1960s was Paul Goodman. Equally critical of the "military-industrial complex" corrupting the schools and professions, and of Leninist cadres engaging in their periodic expeditions to "organize" the new left, Goodman captured the mood of independent indignation that sparked so much protest not long ago. But he made a point of never criticizing without offering a practical alternative. These essays often catch him in his favorite role of proposing little changes through which families and neighbors could gain control over schools and fields, streets and workshops, museums and airwaves. His proposals were "mostly made off the top of my head," he confessed. "But they are quite clever," he added, and perhaps the listener who didn't like them would concoct better ones.

Goodman loved to describe his work as anarchistic. But his was an off-the-top-of-my-head anarchism that could take in the guaranteed annual wage, certain Republican politicians, and nationalized utilities. It is more accurate to think of him as typifying a stubborn American conviction that tightly centralized solutions, even when modern problems seemingly required them, just do not work. Although it is fashionable to describe the sixties as dead, I suspect Goodman's gritty, decentralized approach continues to influence citizens' movements concerned with such problems as ecology, education, and the revival of neighborhoods.

Yet these essays constantly remind us that Goodman is no longer a living presence. He is a historical figure. Taylor Stoehr's valuable introduction shows how Goodman's politics took their bitter edge from efforts to define a course of independent radicalism in the late thirties and from struggles to retain an artistic voice while conscientiously opposing World War II. The occasion for the title essay, "Drawing the Line," was a 1945 order to report for an Army physical; and two interesting pieces from the late forties are addressed to war resisters tempted to go to jail, and to high school graduates tempted to join the Army. These pieces give a glimpse of an important, unwritten chapter in recent history: how old pacifists, whose careers were sidetracked or wrecked because they opposed a "popular" war in the forties, encouraged and aided C.O.s, draft-card burners, and deserters during an "unpopular" war 20 years later.

SOME ESSAYS SHOW GOODman in lonely gestures like the Worldwide Strike for Peace (1962). But his belligerent pacifism clearly found an audience in the sixties; many Northern students found it more compelling than the black Christian variety. When I first met Goodman, he was carrying from campus to campus the idea of refusing deferments and straightforwardly fighting the draft itself as well as the Indochina war. This idea initially shocked young men who were discussing the zaniest measures—even feigning psychosis and homosexuality—to elude conscription. In a short while, partly through Goodman's influence, draft resistance became a major tactic of young radicals. An evocation of the power of the draft to shape young lives is "A Young Pacifist," Goodman's beautiful eulogy to his son Mathew who died in 1967. Mathew's gravestone (surrounded, Stoehr tells us, by others with familiar insignia of war and patriotism) still displays the slogan that he carried on his

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placard during a famous antidraft demonstration earlier that year in Central Park—"Twenty Years Unregistered." Today, of course, there are students to whom draft cards and classifications mean absolutely nothing, and who could not understand the slogan.

Stoehr's introduction also reveals that Goodman felt his work in the sixties drove him from his true calling, literature. As the student left became increasingly violent and manipulative, and as old friends went along uncritically, he felt he had accomplished nothing. Now that his articles appeared in *Playboy* and other glossy magazines, he probably realized that the bright revolution he promoted had turned into a commercialized fake. Though not in any ordinary sense a Marxist, he had read *Capital*'s analysis of commodities too deeply not to know what was going on. And he felt that the sixties, the decade that made him, had ruined him.

ELLIOT KREILOFF

This feeling of being wrecked by success, of being distracted from great work, is one clue that Goodman's life belongs outside political history and fits instead into familiar traditions of American writing. It is remarkable how many American writers have worked through autobiography, making their self-exhibitions emblematic of America's failures, successes, and standing in this world. The literary historian Sacvan Bercovitch traces the origins of this stance to the Puritans' endeavor to find in individual lives the links between divine purposes and national events. The autobiographical stance, at worst, can result in priggishness. But at best it uncovers unconventional truths in the shared experiences of Americans.

Throughout these essays, it is Goodman's life that tests the meanings of American experience, that measures the lifting of repression and the freeing of the spirit. Dozens of sentences that begin "In my opinion . . ." (or a similar phrase) reflect Goodman's assurance that his opining was the historical moment's essential feature. The publishing of ostentatiously unrevised notes and drafts made the same point. Rallies, confrontations, and other public events were absorbed into his life history; at the same time, private experiences, as in the case of Mathew's death, were turned into public events through his writings. To his fans Goodman was not merely opinionated: He dramatized the openness of a time when society could apparently be changed by candid self-assertion. But his I-centered stance also courted the kind of biographical attack that is normally irrelevant. Twice Marxists asked me, as the clinching argument against taking him seriously, "Did you ever meet anyone who knows what he's *really* like?" And in *The Conflict of Generations*, Lewis Feuer dismissed his campus performances as manifesting the problems of an aging homosexual.

GOODMAN STATES IN SEVERAL essays that most worthwhile human activity is collective. This may sound like a paradoxical claim from such a self-avowed eccentric, but it cautions us against reducing his message to the asocial mottoes of contemporary pop culture—"Do your own thing" or "Different strokes for different folks." To resolve the paradox, we should recall that Goodman's writing was not simply autobiographical; it was religious. Nor was it Judaism that interested him. He identified his interest in good professional work with Calvinism. And he was intrigued by archaic Protestant strategies for merging individual and group histories and living blamelessly during a sin-ridden epoch.

These strategies underlie the notion of "drawing the line." The "libertarian," as Goodman defined him, was "rather a millenarian than a utopian." (A 1960 version, which Stoehr does not use, substituted "free spirit" for "libertarian," thus strengthening the religious drift.) "He does not look forward to a future state of things which he tries to bring about by suspect means; but he draws now, so far as he can, on the natural force in him that is no different in kind from what it will be in a free society. . . ." Another essay falls back on theological distinctions between "the Old Law and the New" in order to cry out, "Brothers! the slave within the heart is dead"; the time is auspicious for "positive natural acts" to leaven the earth. Except for favoring "nature," Goodman's distinctions resemble those of Adin Ballou and other mid-nineteenth-century Protestant communitarians. What it all meant to mid-

He typified the American view that centralized solutions do not work, and was equally critical of the military-industrial complex and of Leninists out to organize the new left.

twentieth-century readers is a puzzle.

Goodman's interest in Protestantism grew with his fame. He told a Berkeley mass meeting in 1965 that "it took only 250 years for the University revolt of Wyclif and Hus to bring on the University-led Reformation." By his own report, the students "didn't much relish the thought of Hus at the stake, but they were crazy for the Wyclifites at Oxford standing on the ramparts and fighting off the King with bows and arrows." The moment brought out the two-sidedness of his identification with youth. On the one hand, he plainly enjoyed imagining them at the barricades, and his praise made their acts seem legitimate. On the other, only a compact sense of centuries—one that urgent young people couldn't understand—authorized the praise. Here, too, he reminds me of Adin Ballou, who ended up something of a pessimist, waiting out his days. In the later essays Goodman asks less and less of the present: Human nature is too "lousy" to permit far-reaching reforms.

THOSE WHO SAW GOODMAN as a nutty utopian, impatient for easy solutions, overlooked the religious basis of his thinking. They also missed the extent to which he was not a reformer at all, but a demodernizer. His central wish strikes me as having been to dismantle modern institutions and restore the strict life of peasant communities. It is a truism

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about Goodman that he disliked refrigerators, cars, and other luxuries when they got in the way of "natural communities." Before reading this collection, however, I was not aware just how far he went in defining the natural as the premodern. He looked back to a community in which coercion arose from neighborly pressures rather than "the law"; the shame of exposure in the stocks may have hurt less than the guilt that attends modern repressions. In the old days, children picked up education naturally, while working, and had no need for imprisoning specialized institutions. Goodman even counted the "face to face" dealings between eighteenth century squires and commoners as a version of "community anarchy."

This side of Goodman's thought has not worn very well. For one thing, he exaggerates the material well-being of premodern folk (and does some gingerly footwork around servitude). For another, his demodernizing pose rests inconsistently beside his confidence in the modern "prudent" middle class, who won some measure of freedom by abandoning old-fashioned habits. (The case is strongest with regard to women, whom Goodman ignores almost totally.) It is clear, in any case, that the sexual behavior he recommended would not have escaped punishment in the customary villages to which he looked for models of community anarchy.

NOSTALGIA FOR THE OLD days is hard for a radical to avoid. The feeling that we have "gone astray" (as Stoehr puts it) may contribute to the radical's inspiration. Furthermore, to believe that the good life of our dreams is somehow attainable in the future, we must find some grounds in the lives of people who have already lived. The alternatives are mindless incendiarism or the kind of blueprint utopia that leads, as Goodman saw so clearly, to tyranny. My point is not that Goodman shouldn't have offered a version of history, but that his version would look better if it did not so often fall into rather conventional hostility toward preceding generations of middle-class Americans. It also suffers by comparison with the discoveries of E. P. Thompson and others who find in working-class cultures lively traditions that run in opposition to the official histories of governments and ruling classes. A different kind of libertarianism could be built on their work.

I have deliberately not discussed the views of sex and psychology that some readers may believe are fundamental to Goodman's politics. My reasons are several. First, psychology is the subject of a companion volume; here his views are mostly taken for granted. Second, sex evidently declined in political significance for Goodman over the years: While early essays demanded the sexual liberation of children, the older Goodman sounded more charitable toward parents and treated his own exploits simply as an example of inexpensive human activity that will go on in the "mixed system." Third, the psychological passages are the least impressive parts of his political writings, versions of the kind of psychologizing Feuer turned on him.

Libertarians have a way of writing history so that their heroes lose all flaws and inconsistencies—and also lose any audience. I hope Goodman will be spared that treatment. He was a serious, reflective writer in a time that valued activism, and this useful collection repays close reading. ❏

CREATOR SPIRIT COME! The Literary Essays of Paul Goodman, edited by Taylor Stoehr. Free Life Editions, 284 pp., $11.95.

Literature as a way of being

EMILE CAPOUYA

IN HIS INTERESTING INTRODUCTION to his selection of Paul Goodman's literary essays, Taylor Stoehr gives a lively account of Goodman's career as a man of letters, which was long, productive, and varied. Naturally enough, Stoehr is not much concerned here to take issue with his author—he has quite enough to do simply to sketch the general lines of Goodman's intellectual development, to describe in orderly fashion the composition of his chief works, and to recount their fortunes in the world. And yet, reading Paul Goodman is a heads-up affair. Every reader will want to make his own judgment about Goodman's special excellencies and his characteristic foibles. The premise, of course, is that Goodman was so unusual and so valuable a writer on literature that his views are worth taking seriously, as it would be folly to take seriously the views of most writers on the subject.

Goodman was well aware that science is the religion of our time, and even more the superstition of our time. Nevertheless, he was a sucker for science himself. Or, more elegantly put, he delighted in the elegance of scientific demonstration—or any demonstration that imitated the beautiful tautologies of arithmetical reasoning. For him, the conclusion of any argument so designed was as satisfying as a chord happily resolved.

It is, of course, a matter of luck if science and reason, so conceived, do not end by slaying whatever subject they contemplate. Some 15 years ago, I heard Paul Goodman speak at a public meeting whose general theme was nuclear disarmament. Goodman's contribution to the discussion was to rebuke the young collegians who were going to the South to take part in the early phase of the integration movement. He thought their impulse was inauthentic. His view was that their real interests were the relaxation of parietal rules in the dormitories and the legalization of marijuana. He recommended that they fight for those goals—and also perhaps for nuclear disarmament, since that issue might be regarded as everybody's business—but maintained that their interest in full civil rights for their black fellow-citizens was a callow displacement of emotional energies. Now, how could this remarkably humane and imaginative man have been brought to make so muttonheaded a pronouncement? By the influence of psychology, the science that he himself practiced. Current psychology happens to hold infantile theories about the motions of the soul, and Goodman had deduced from its jejune categories that young whites in the North could not possibly feel an authentic passion for the rights of blacks in the South.

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TO TOUCH UPON SOME LITerary instances of the same impulse: In the remarkable essay, "An Apology for Literature" (which Goodman touchingly and appropriately concludes with an apology *pro vita sua*), he quotes wonderfully telling lines from Shelley's "Defence of Poetry," and then remarks:

In my opinion, there is a lot of truth in this—it is grounded in Coleridge's post-Kantian epistemology. It *is* odd, however, that as a philosophic anarchist after Godwin, Shelley should end the *Defence* with the fatuous sentence, "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." What does he intend? That they should be acknowledged? Then what would they do?

The answers to Goodman's three questions are (1) To state a proposition that the whole of Shelley's essay supports; (2) No, since the power of poets does not derive from formal authority but from a faculty to which such authority is irrelevant or pernicious—that of giving exquisite expression to the moral intuitions of mankind; (3) See (1) and (2) above. Reader, it is a safe bet that Paul Goodman was at least as intelligent as you and I. How was it that he misread Shelley? Psychology, again. I think he forgot for a moment that moral diseases are historically specific to a time and place, and that Shelley's century was, in comparison with our own, enormously self-confident and unselfconscious; that the swollen self-regard that gives the tone to social intercourse today would have been considered evidence of insanity in Shelley's time, an absolute inability to catch the social signals exchanged by civilized people; that Shelley was not talking about himself, but about a law that he considered to be outside himself and superior to himself—the way in which moral influence is propagated among human beings. These matters are so patent that I am sure that if you and I had delivered ourselves of so faulty a judgment, Goodman would have explained our mistake to us with his habitual air—at once intimate and impersonal—of invoking in the name of all of us a law outside of us and superior to us—the law that commands a just appreciation of the great-hearted dead. But our baby psychology misled him in this case, simply because it has no historical dimension.

In the preface to his novel, *The Grand Piano*, Goodman wrote:

Again, a certain abstraction comes from the style. I try to present only such surface appearances as are given with their social causes (or more rarely, their causes in the family constellation). The chief words of vitality and color are thus "because" or "inasmuch as" or "the fact that . . . this made him"; or especially the divine formula of Proust, "Soit que (c'est à dire parce que)"—"Despite the fact (that is, just because)." I say especially this one because the explanation of the characters is dialectical and progressive thruout; perhaps the chief element of suspense is nothing but the question, "What will he be next?"

NOW, IT IS UNDERSTANDable that Goodman might want to claim that the development of his characters is dialectical—that puts him in good company, with Marx, Hegel, and Plato. But *soit que* does not come within a country mile of meaning "despite." Goodman's translation of the "divine formula" has a

ELLIOT KRELOFF

charm that is foreign to the original, the charm of seeming paradox. Come to think of it, the dialectic probably owes a good deal of its popularity to its apparent ability to pull rabbits out of hats. Goodman's translation also has the brilliant glint of chiasmus: The power of that trope over the minds of men can be gauged by the fact that an otherwise unremarkable young fellow got to be president of the United States largely because his speech-writers minted for him such phrases as, "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask rather what you can do for your country." Perfectly un-American, and perfectly ravishing.

In the instance we are dealing with, Goodman naturally mistranslated Proust out of an innocent fetishism for whatever could be made to seem dialectical. It was an offshoot of his general infatuation with form—which was sometimes fruitful for his criticism and sometimes rendered barren his own fiction. (In his poetry he paid far less attention to the intellectual elaboration of structural systems; he was at his best an excellent poet, a real poet.) In this regard, what is particularly surprising in a man whose instinct and insight were true, immediate, and immediately available, Goodman's trust in a notional concept of form—was this the promised end, after Aristotle?—led him to employ an abstract vocabulary that, on analysis, frequently turns out to refer not to experience but to other abstractions. The effect is to make the reader feel stupid. But he has been balked in his expectation that the terms employed would describe and illuminate the features of a work of art.

Again, Goodman had Wordsworth's authority for cherishing colloquial speech, and like Wordsworth he used it in a way that sometimes lends him an awkward grandeur, no less touching and no less grand for being awkward. But when he theorizes about his practice, he says odd things, as here, in "An Apology for Literature":

When writing, I take my syntax and words from my colloquial speech; I strongly disapprove of the usual distinction between "standard colloquial" and "standard literary." I will write the slang that I consider worth using when I talk, for instance in the last few pages I have written "he comes on strongly," "their conversation sends me," "I am lousy at it," "he talked it up."

The distinction that Goodman points to and disapproves of is not to the purpose here. To begin with, the expression is "he comes on strong"; to alter the syntax makes about as much sense as monkeying with "How do you like them apples?" The force of the phrase evaporates if you tack on the adverbial ending. (Can it be that some of the awkward grandeur is the happy effect of the tin ear?) "Sends me" is kid talk of the era of the big bands. "Their conversation sends me" combines two very different levels of language and is worthy of Mrs. Malaprop. The principal feature of "I am lousy at it" seems to me to have had a short life, born when I was and dying at about the time I became an adult. "He talked it up" is the one expression in the bunch that sounds like grown-up English—the others are, or rather were, passwords of the young and the imitators of the young. "I take my syntax and words"—a phrase not identified by Goodman as proceeding from his colloquial speech—is another example of a forced marriage between incompatible levels of language. As for, "I will write the slang that I consider worth using when I talk," that use of "will" strikes me as not being English at all.

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AFTER THESE GRIM DEfects, what is left? In my opinion, one of the most interesting, most consistently useful literary men of my lifetime. (I speak of him only as a man of letters, in the straitened sense, so as not to go beyond my brief. Paul Goodman's political writings and his essays on psychology, collected in two companion volumes by the same modest and attractively enthusiastic editor, are memorials of further investigations for which their author would not have disclaimed the qualifier "literary": to science he preferred the old term "natural philosophy," because he approved of the implicit ethos; to the modern university, where the disciplines live in watertight compartments, he preferred the trivium and quadrivium of the great age of universities—not to say the conversation of the agora and the stoa; and in all things Goodman willingly harked back to times when every variety of intellectual pursuit was confounded with authorship and literature.) He described himself as an anarchist, and, appropriately enough, practiced the citizenly virtues. An instinctive democrat, he did what he could to prevent the further degradation of the democratic dogma: He detested the notion that all ideas are equal—some he knew to be good, and he advocated them; others he knew to be bad, and with endless patience he explained how one could tell. The business of making fine discriminations is ill paid and breeds bad temper, but Goodman's manners in debate were generally exemplary.

Though a democrat, he detested the view that all ideas are equal—some he knew to be good, others to be bad, and with endless patience he would explain how one could tell the difference.

In this collection, three splendid essays, dating from the late forties and early fifties, follow in quick succession: "Reflections on Literature as a Minor Art," "Occasional Poetry," and "The Chance for Popular Culture." The first two are quite short and the third is not long, but all have room for a characteristic disclaimer—the note of false objectivity, of elaborate calm. Elsewhere, Goodman analyzes literary naturalism, and decides that its tonelessness, its refusal to comment explicitly on the scene being displayed, is an expression of resentment and is meant to provoke the audience. I think there is a good deal to that. Goodman himself does something of the sort when he adopts his falsely objective tone. It takes the place of a pained outcry, and is about as convincing as the claim of the child forsaken by his playmates that he doesn't care. But despite these instances of masquerade, the essays are wonderful—they raise the essential questions.

In "The Chance for Popular Culture," Goodman writes:

Lastly, works of popular art have the following form: they present an important emotional situation, of love, danger, adventure, in a framework where everything else is as usual. The detailed routine of life, the posture and speech-habits of the actor (and the audience), the norms of morality, the timetable of work, these things are not deranged by the plot; they are not newly assessed, criticized, X-rayed, devastated by the passional situation. Therefore the aesthetic experience remains superficial; the passional story releases a surface tenseness, but there is no change in character, habit, or action. One does not sink into these works or return to them, for what is there to sink into or return to? and therefore again there must be more and more. (In the popular music the form is that the outer limbs are moved, even violently agitated, but no visceral sentiment or tenderness of the breast is touched.) By definition art of such form can have no style, for style is the penetration of every least detail by character and feeling. Somehow the popular arts have won the reputation of having a "slick," professional style; but this is false, because the least scrutiny or attempt to feel the meaning with one's body or experience makes one see that the works are put together with preposterous improbability. It is a Sophocles or a Shakespeare who is professional and workmanlike; in comparison with the style of *The New Yorker*, Dreiser is slick and neat.

GOODMAN ASSUMES THAT the falseness of popular art, so-called, which he describes with such point and feeling, arises in large part from the way in which it is sold, and the character and interests of those who do the selling. And surely that must be a great factor, since among us art scarcely exists if it cannot satisfy market conditions that arise far less from the desires of producers and consumers than from the desires of intermediaries who, in the most active sense, *are* the market. A patent or a copyright does not protect an inventor or an author—both are forced to dispose of their work to a corporation on terms acceptable to the corporation: In practice, patent and copyright simply guarantee an exclusive right to sell to the entity that markets the work of an inventor or author. Nor does the consumer set the terms on which he buys the work of either. And certainly he cannot buy what is not being offered for sale by intermediaries.

Here is Goodman's modest proposal for giving popular culture a chance to be popular culture rather than a culture dispensed to the people. My guess is that it represents a very slim chance, and unless the future surprises us, the only one.

So we come, finally, to a hackneyed political issue. And frankly, as an unreconstructed anarchist, I still must consider the solution of this issue easy, easy in theory, easy in practice; if we do not apply it, it is for moral reasons, sluggishness, timidity, getting involved in what is not one's business, etc. The way to get rid of dummy intermediaries is by direct action. Concretely, in the present context of popular art (I am always fertile in little expedients): let actors get themselves a cellar and act and forget about the critical notices; let writers scrape together a few dollars and print off a big broadside of newsprint and give it away to all likely comers on 8th Street; forget about Hollywood movies—they don't exist—and how surprising it is to find one can make a movie for a couple of hundred dollars and show it off in a loft. I don't want to lay stress on such particular expedients; but it is ridiculous to gripe about vast sociopsychological labyrinths when what is lacking is elementary enterprise and belief.

You see, I myself am waiting for my friends to open a little night-club where the talents that we know galore can enliven us, instead of our frequenting idiotic places that bore us; and where I myself, setting myself exactly to this task, with concern and love (and a little hot hate), can move an audience to the belly and be greeted by a roar of laughter, hushed attention, a storm of anger, gleaming tears.

"What's this? he speaks of popular culture, mass-media, the state of society, and he ends up pleading for a little night-club where he and his friends and their hangers-on can display themselves!" Listen, here is my concern: I want to be happy; I am an artist, I'm bound to it, and I am fighting for happiness in the ways an artist can. If you, audience or artist, take care of yourselves, the intermediary somethings will get less take at their box-offices, and we'll have a popular culture.

Two further essays, "Kerouac's *On the Road*" and "The Sweet Style of Ernest Hemingway"—the latter I remember in its first incarnation, lighting up the not always incandescent pages of the *New York Review*—are certainly among the best examples of practical criticism of fiction that I have read.

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The Common Preoccupation

He was one of those guys who
starts to prophesy, to prepare
his own death from
the minute he's told
that he's also human, no
better. Not exempt. Or
rather — that being human is so
much less than he felt it was.
Never realizing how presumptuous all this is.
Tolstoy, after being tortured daily
by the thought for forty years,
died, alone, quite triumphant and content after
a week's mild illness. And take Villon. Villon,
who predicted himself tortured, drawn
and hung up young — a public, agonized
spectacle — disappeared! He's
never been heard from and
for all we know, may have escaped.
May be holed up hunched
over a hotplate in someone's
spare room. A strange
luminous old man
with his childhood intact.

Ruth

She says the most
surprising part of
getting as old as she is,
is finding you haven't
ever changed; that
once the future's gone, the present
intrudes itself daily, hourly, somewhat
like the cuckoo on her wall, and

you find you're no
longer startled
by the ghosts

only curious
about why they come and go
and why
they never speak,
but linger
softly around your bed,
every night
like parents.

The Medium

Be careful who you call
for help, how loudly
you complain. You might have
simply wanted your young
mother to hear you weeping, but
the spirits in their ignorance
may think it fit to send you the
stern and tragic Madame
Ulanov. She'll take your hand and
walk beside you. Then you'll know
it's no longer your game.
You'll realize what you should have
all along. The dead don't have any
interest in keeping you alive.
When they intercede in your
life, it's with complete
indifference. Notice how
they never even speak to
you directly. They only use
your voice. So that you're
constantly cultivating these neurotic
circles of desperate friends, begging
them to remember what you said,
what inflection, what voice
you used, what your face looked like when
the spirit transformed you.

ART BECK

ART BECK is the author of two volumes of poetry, Enlightenment *and* The Discovery of Music.

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BLUE COLLAR, directed by Paul Schrader.

COMA, directed by Michael Crichton.

Hard knocks and the perils of Geneviève

STEPHEN HARVEY

IN THE DAYS WHEN AUTEUR was a word used to describe Honoré de Balzac rather than John Ford, stellar Hollywood writers like Mankiewicz, Sturges, and Wilder turned to directing mainly to preserve the integrity of their scripts. Today, young tyros churn out screenplays in the hopes of earning a director's chair with their names indelibly stenciled on the back. The most recent of those to make this transition is Paul Schrader, who already has the scripts for *The Yakuza*, *Obsession*, and, most notably, *Taxi Driver* under his belt, and whose knack for making movieland deals is at least as finely honed as his writing talents.

Schrader's first directorial effort is the current *Blue Collar*, a caustic drama concerning labor unrest in the auto industry, from an original screenplay by his brother Leonard and himself. As many movie writers have learned (to their chagrin), there's a yawning gap between writing a script for what promises to be a riveting movie and realizing it effectively on screen; *Blue Collar* bears the earmarks of Schrader's inexperience in the latter department. Nevertheless, he's made a most auspicious debut with this film—for all its lapses, it's one of the most vigorous and compelling movies to appear in recent months.

Most of Schrader's previous work has pivoted on the unequal struggle between a lone individual and the corrupt monolith that allegedly governs all our lives; *Blue Collar* is another variation, times three, on the same theme. Zeke (Richard Pryor), Jerry (Harvey Keitel), and Smokey (Yaphet Kotto) are assembly-line workers and after-hours drinking cronies trying to scrape together a decent livelihood while hassled by management foremen and benignly ignored by a sweetheart union. Desperate for extra cash, they plot a heist of the union safe, only to find more than they bargained for—evidence of financial corruption on the part of the labor organization. Their amateurish attempt at blackmail a dismal fiasco, the three find themselves pursued by their cutthroat union bosses on one side and the feds on the other. Ultimately, one of the three men is liquidated and the other two are at each other's throats, each co-opted by one of the opposing forces—thus underscoring Schrader's thesis that the powers-that-be perpetuate themselves by fomenting infighting among the masses.

Schrader's all-pervasive cynicism has a slightly facile ring to it, and it's tempting to conjecture how much of this has been fueled by the liberal guilt of someone who has managed to outmaneuver the Big Guys at their own game, while leaving common humanity behind. (It's easy to become skeptical about a system willing to pay you $600,000 *not* to make a film, as happened not long ago to Schrader.) Yet for the most part, Schrader has the wit to prevent his characters from foundering in the shoals of bombast. Practically any message can be made persuasive on screen if the characters have some dimension and the milieu in which they're placed has an authentic air about it, and Schrader has succeeded remarkably well on both counts. Filmed largely on location at a Checker assembly plant in Kalamazoo, Michigan, *Blue Collar* ably conveys the grit and noise of factory life; it does even better with the grimy utilitarianism that pervades the average company town. Schrader never condescends to the people who inhabit this world, nor does he succumb to the temptation to transform them into papier-mâché icons of working-class martyrdom. Canny, forthright Zeke and sober, plodding Jerry are appealing people, but both are fully capable of trading away their principles when cornered. (A faint halo does hang over Smokey, the third member of this trio, but considering that he's portrayed by the formidable Kotto—a sly mountain

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encased in a "Dizzy Gillespie for President" T-shirt—the only way to avoid this would have been by casting a less potent personality in the role.)

SCHRADER HAS A WELL-tuned ear for the terse cadences of everyday speech, and on the evidence of this film he has an undeniable way with actors as well. Keitel, with his chunky frame, dank voice, and hurt, stoic gaze, has always been well suited to playing thwarted nice guys with banked emotions. Yet it is the disciplined ease of Pryor's performance that is *Blue Collar*'s most unexpected asset. Certain comics have tried to go legit either by lathering on lots of fussy technique or by totally erasing all those traits which made them distinctive to begin with. Pryor ably sidesteps both—he sheds the eccentric tricks of his usual trade, the googly eyes and manic body English, and lets his intelligence take over. He's relaxed enough to allow this character's lifelong frustration to simmer without any superfluous nudges on his part, and it's heartening to see a performer confident enough in his audience and his own resources to take the gamble and win.

For all its earnestness, *Blue Collar* is by no means unrelentingly grim; its occasional preachiness is balanced by passages of raw humor, arising from the easy interplay between the three leads and their futile efforts to crack the complacency of the ruling orders. The film has its obligatory quotient of menacing hit-men and bumper-banging auto chases, and thus skirts the boundaries of standard action melodrama, but Schrader could hardly be accused of exploiting the potential for mayhem inherent in the subject—his camera is positively reticent as far as explicit bloodletting is concerned. Schrader's inexperience, however, shows in the mechanics of pulling it all together—as a director, he hasn't quite developed the craftsmanship to solve all the complicated problems posed by his script. After the abortive caper takes place midway through the film, Schrader has trouble sustaining the momentum developed during the energetic first half. In part, the problem lies in the structure of the plot, which dawdles over the tangled aftermath as it affects all three characters. Here the screenwriter's urge to include every telling detail clashes with the director's need to keep the basic thrust of the story from taking any unneeded detours, however illuminating. At the same time, Schrader's command of the medium varies widely from one sequence to the next; a wordless scene of death by slow asphyxiation is constructed with classic sureness and expertise, while other scenes resemble the bollixed-up outtakes that convulse late-night TV viewers on the Johnny Carson show. (At one particularly low point, two bit-players are seen stalled in a doorway, waiting for Keitel and Pryor to finish a scene so that they can make their entrance.) The result is that *Blue Collar* seems a lot longer than it actually is, and rather more convoluted than it need be. Yet in the long run, I don't think this matters much. The professional polish Schrader still lacks can always be acquired in time, but there's no substitute for the vigor and freshness that *Blue Collar* possesses in abundance.

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT ANY movie with a title like *Coma* is just asking for trouble, even if the novel it's based on is emblazoned on every paperback rack from Bangor to Baja California. I haven't read the book, but I suspect the plot is a lot more chilling when it unfolds on the printed page than when every hoped-for shock is literalized on screen.

The story is familiar paranoid-thriller stuff, spruced up with a few topical touches: A dedicated young surgeon (Geneviève Bujold) becomes alarmed at the number of coma cases occurring among young patients during routine operations, and gradually perceives that some vast medical conspiracy is behind it all. True to the genre, no one believes a word of her story. As the network of complicity widens, she herself is on the point of becoming its victim, when her pompous boyfriend and co-worker (Michael Douglas) comes to his senses. Along the way, director Michael Crichton (himself the author of slick page-turners à la *The Andromeda Strain*) throws in the expected assortment of red herrings and white-garbed malefactors, while tossing off some casual references to organ transplants and life-support systems to give it all an air of spurious significance.

Only a pedant would expect this kind of time-killer to bear any resemblance to humdrum reality, but some kind of nightmarish logic has to be adhered to in order to scare up a few thrills. It was a clever enough bid for audience identification to make the protagonist a woman—it's not just scientific skepticism but arrant bigotry that prompts her colleagues to discount her suspicions, dismissing them all as a product of emotional strain and an overactive female imagination. As long as the story remains fairly straightforward and the threat sufficiently amorphous, the movie makes enough sense to be moderately suspenseful on its own pulpy terms. Then, rather abruptly, Crichton and crew spoil everything by getting fancy on us. Desperate to top each succeeding miniclimax with a bigger and better jolt, *Coma* forces Bujold to disport herself like something out of a Pearl White serial—crouching atop speeding ambulances, playing dead in a freezer full of cadavers, shimmying up a narrow ladder through the entrails of this hospital-turned-charnelhouse, and like episodes. But the minute a movie like this starts provoking titters instead of gasps, everyone involved might just as well capitulate and play it for unalloyed camp.

For all its earnestness, "Blue Collar" is by no means unrelentingly grim; its preachiness is balanced by raw humor.

Nevertheless, practically the entire luckless cast persists in the kind of underacting usually found in TV movies about rampaging flora and fauna. Rip Torn sneers and Richard Widmark glowers, but both are outclassed by a bleached-blond heavy named Lance LeGault, who scowls dutifully each time he lurches into view, just in case the audience had forgotten how nasty he was in the previous reel. Then there's deadpan Elizabeth Ashley, who, like an updated Mrs. Danvers in *Rebecca*, stalks about the forbidding ultraviolet-lit "Jefferson Institute" for the terminally comatose. As for Bujold, a puzzle more baffling than any contained in the plot is why an actress as radiant and intelligent as she is must squander her gifts on nonsense like this in order to be taken seriously in Hollywood. Whether or not it will do much to advance her career is an academic point; you'd have to be pretty gullible or have a rather morbid sense of humor to succumb to *Coma*. ❏

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Merle Haggard: classicist

NAT HENTOFF

"THE MUSIC THAT LASTS comes out of real life," a black blues singer told me once. "People know the music's real because the stories could be about them."

I was thinking of that black wanderer one night, almost 20 years ago, while watching Earl Scruggs and Lester Flatt play a date in a small Alabama town that looked like the last outpost of the Great Depression. The crops had been bad, I was told, and whatever else there was of the economy had never been good.

At the fairground, sitting kind of stiffly on rickety bleachers, was most of the town. Except the blacks. Young couples with kids, their parents, and, I guess, their parents' parents. Hearing the music, *their* music, loosened them right up. There was sizzling bluegrass powered by the banjo of Earl Scruggs, fully as magical a virtuoso on that Alabama evening as Andrés Segovia was in some other setting that night. The band also excelled in high, lonesome harmonies; and the ballads—most of them about extramarital slipping and sliding in small towns—were spun magnetically by Lester Flatt.

Back on the band bus—for this alien had been allowed to travel with the good old boys—there was much talk, between towns, of tradition, those who had shaped it, those who were nourishing it. Back where I came from, on buses carrying jazzmen, the names would include Coleman Hawkins, Louis Armstrong, Big Joe Turner. On this bus, moving on to Tennessee, the musicians spoke of Jimmie Rodgers, Bob Wills, Roy Acuff. They were proud of their natural roots, and downright pleased at how eager the folks in the small towns were to have them drop by.

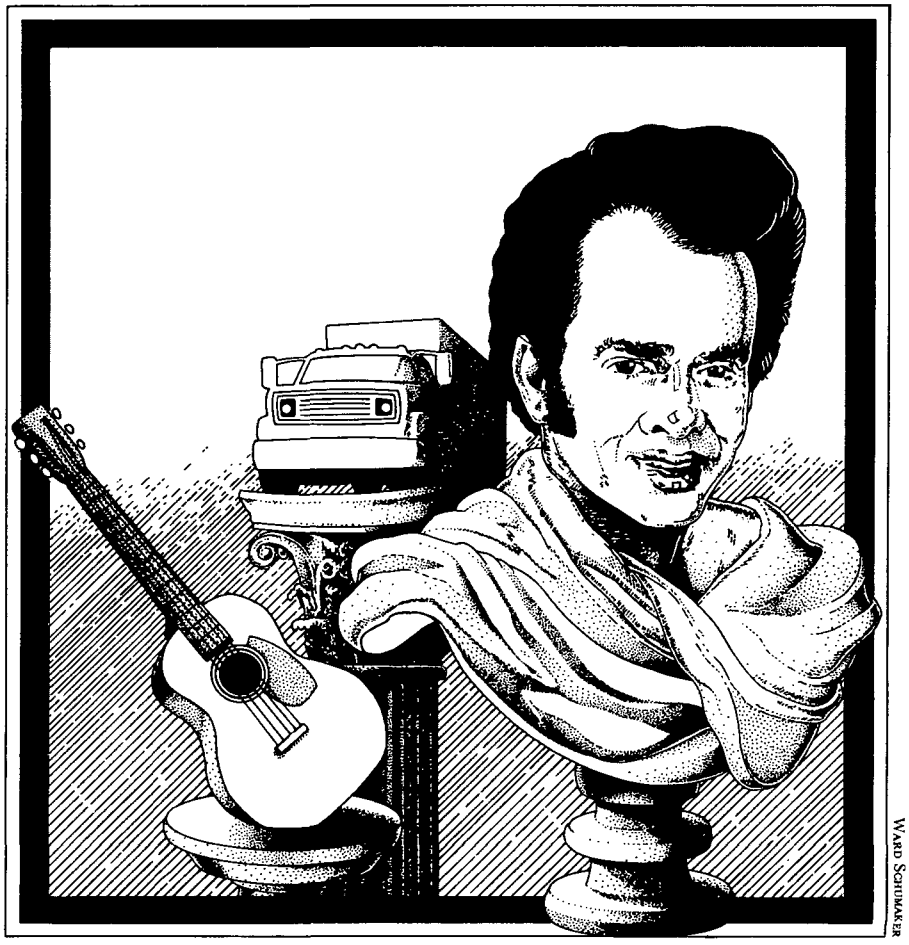
At that time, the late fifties, audiences for white country music were still primarily in the South and Southwest. But there were also sizable enclaves of transplanted down-home listeners in the big Northern cities (particularly Detroit and Chicago) as well as in those parts of the West Coast where the Okies had finally let their old cars rest.

White country music, however, made scant impact on those non-Southerners who considered themselves hip to the inside sounds. Jazz had cachet, and black blues, and certain strands of folk music. But "hillbilly" music was considered far too simple and simple-minded to warrant attention. Besides, it was "commercial," by contrast with folk music which was "pure," even though some folk performers in those years were beginning to amass rather large royalties.

Actually, the sophisticates' proud ignorance of country music was due to just plain cultural elitism. How could crackers, all of whom were assumed to be racists, create anything worth hearing? When superhip Charlie Parker told his colleagues he liked the stories on those country records, no one paid Bird any mind, adding this bizarre notion to his long list of eccentricities.

DURING THE SIXTIES, HOWever, when rock became an overwhelming ecumenical force in popular music, more and more country performers began to find listeners among the young throughout the republic. Even some professional hipsters nodded, too. Reacting to the change, a number of country players, beguiled by all the money to be made as the whole nation became their territory, watered down their roots and now sound more pop than country (the latter-day Dolly Parton, for example).

Others, however, will not be overcome. They are too passionate about their lineage to become assimilated—just as certain jazz players have resisted the large monetary temptations of



WARD SCHUMAKER

NAT HENTOFF has written widely on jazz. His most recent book on the subject is Jazz Is.

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jazz-rock in order not to violate their own histories (the difference, for instance, between Herbie Hancock and Cecil Taylor).

In country music, the most unfailingly absorbing of the stubborn classicists is Merle Haggard. A wiry loner, the 41-year-old singer-guitarist-violinist has occasionally made recordings that hit the pop charts, but his basic audience is made up of blue-collar workers, small-town folk, and those who feed the jukeboxes at far-flung truckstops.

A recent Haggard album, *A Working Man Can't Get Nowhere Today* (Capitol), underlines some of his strengths—a mastery of white blues (with a touch of Jimmie Rodgers); a rugged but gentle ability to make love songs sound thornily autobiographical; and permeating everything, an insistence on never being tied down. ("I was born the running kind, with leaving always on my mind.")

Backed by his crisp, strongly pulsing band, The Strangers, Haggard is a resilient singer with a secure sense of rolling time. He does not, however, showboat. There are no effects—of timbre, of dynamics—that are inserted just to rouse the audience. The way he tells stories, the drama comes from within.

Among Haggard's heroes are Jimmie Rodgers (the master of white country blues) and Bob Wills (creator of "Western swing," an exultant fusion of country and jazz). Haggard's tributes on Capitol to these two procreators are essential to any library of country music—*Same Train, a Different Time/ Merle Haggard Sings the Great Songs of Jimmie Rodgers* and *A Tribute to the Best Damn Fiddle Player in the World* (or, *My Salute to Bob Wills*).

Recently, Haggard has also caught the spirit of another semicountry legend in *My Farewell to Elvis/From Graceland to the Promised Land* (MCA). In all these salutes, Haggard distills the stylistic essence of the departed performer rather than merely imitating his outer mannerisms. The result is as much Haggard as Rodgers, Wills, or Presley. And yet, there is also the uncanny sense that the ghosts of all of them are somehow also in the grooves.

Once asked what he himself would most like to be remembered as, Haggard said, "A writer, I guess. Somebody who did some living and wrote songs about what he knew. Just like Jimmie Rodgers did."

Haggard has done some living. His parents were Okies, settling in Bakersfield, California, where Merle Haggard was born. His father was a carpenter with the Santa Fe Railroad, and the son's identification with the working class comes out of hard memory: "They were working 10-hour days, six days a week. And I remember Daddy coming in real upset, because they had cut it to nine hours, five-and-a-half days."

When Merle Haggard was nine, his father died, and some of Haggard's songs tell of what it was like then ("Mamma Tried" and "Mamma's Hungry Eyes"). The boy began to get into scrapes that became much more serious. In time, the Haggard sheet read: stolen car, armed robbery, fake checks, second-degree burglary, and escape. At 20, Merle Haggard was sent to San Quentin for six months to 15 years.

A week in solitary across the hall from Death Row turned him around. He got into no more trouble, earned a high school equivalency diploma while putting in the rest of his time, became part of the warden's country band, and one night, the newly earnest inmate was part of the clamorous audience as Johnny Cash came to San Quentin to play for this truly captive audience. All in all, Haggard says he's glad he was put in the slammer. "I'm not so sure it works like that very often," he told journalist Paul Hemphill, "but I'm one guy the prison system straightened out. I know damn well I'm a better man because of it."

BACK IN BAKERSFIELD, Haggard drove a truck and dug ditches while making music on weekends. Gradually, he became a full-time performer, and by 1968, Haggard was an actual country music star. On his back, then as now, was the tattoo of a spider. "He did it," his former wife once explained, "when he was young and felt trapped."

With Haggard having moved on to MCA Records not long ago, his old label, Capitol, has released *Merle Haggard and The Strangers/Eleven Winners*. It's a well-seasoned cross-section of the Haggard canon. There's the classic "It's Not Love (But It's Not Bad)"—a true grit account of what it's like to have to settle for second best in your arms. There is also, for the boys on the interstate, "Movin' On": "It takes a special breed to be a truck-driving man/And a steady hand to pull that load behind." And, of course, there are other sempiternal variations on love, licit and otherwise: "If We Make It Through December" and "You'll Always Be Special." The latter, to which a good many married males have been drawn, does not so much condone adultery as point out that if a man is treated bad at home, there could be consequences.

Throughout all of Haggard's music, there is a continuing oral history of the ways in which a good many Americans live and work and fantasize and drink and juggle what time they have left. They are not fashionable folk, but their stories can sometimes be as powerful and poignant as those in, let us say, opera. And their rhythms are a lot more naturally quickening.

In Merle Haggard, these people hear themselves. And what he has written for and about them has been crafted to last. As Kris Kristofferson said, "That man has already written some of the best folk songs that's ever been done. I think that now, when we speak of Merle Haggard, we aren't speaking about how he's going to come out on the Country Music Association Awards this year; we're talking about posterity." ◾

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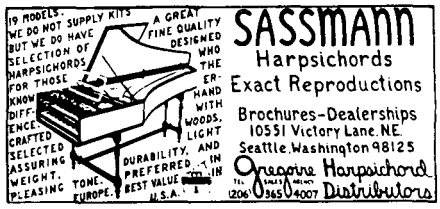
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LETTERS

A more radical principle?

I AM SURE THERE WERE countless "civil" and other libertarians who, waking momentarily from their dogmatic slumbers, managed to nod approvingly upon reading Nat Hentoff's piece in the Nov. 21 issue.

I trust too that there were countless others who, like myself, aroused themselves sufficiently to question Mr. Hentoff's argument. I hope that a simple statement of doubts will make it clear that the issue is not quite so clear-cut (at least in the terms that Mr. Hentoff states it) as might have been thought.

1. Does Mr. Hentoff (or did Justice Black) actually expect us to swallow the supposed distinction between *saying* and *doing?* I am at a loss to find a way that I, or anyone else of my acquaintance, can *say* something without concurrently *doing* something—whether it be opening my mouth, setting pen to paper, or publishing a magazine. Perhaps I am missing an intellectual and legal subtlety here, but surely "saying" is one of the many things we *do*.

2. Is not the First Amendment in fact precisely a guarantee of my right to *do* certain things, viz., open my mouth, set my pen to paper, or publish my views in a magazine?

3. Granted that the First Amendment was designed to protect my right to engage in that subcategory of doing which we call "saying." Nonetheless, it does not seem perverse or tyrannical to ask, Is there perhaps a principle which takes logical precedence over the principle of "free speech" (i.e., a principle from which the idea of free speech is logically derived), and which, because of that precedence, requires that in any conflict between it and uninhibited free speech, the decision must go to the more radical principle?

4. A couple of simple examples: (a) Would Mr. Hentoff be willing to grant me the right to yell "Fire!" in a crowded (or even sparsely populated) theater? (b) Would it make a difference whether there were actually a fire or not? (c) Would Mr. Hentoff be willing to grant me the right to claim anything I like in an ad for my latest cancer cure? (d) Would it make a difference whether my claims were true or not?

I hope these questions will cause some searching to find the more radical principle.

THOMAS ROWLAND
Beltsville, Md.

NAT HENTOFF replies: The distinction between saying and doing, while sometimes blurred, is usually clear enough. If I were to become angry with Mr. Rowland, for example, I might punch him in the nose (doing). *Or I might write a ferocious rebuttal to his ideas* (saying). *The former action would make me liable to criminal penalties. In the latter example–robust expression–I am protected by the First Amendment against penalties imposed by the state.*

The principle from which free speech is logically derived is that of the self-preservation of this republic. It was the clear understanding of the framers of the Constitution—particularly James Madison, principal architect of the First Amendment—that the new nation could not remain free unless its citizenry were empowered by the Constitution to speak and write freely. The framers knew the history of seditious libel in England and in the colonies. They wished to be rid of restraints on speech, particularly with regard to criticism of the government. There is a question as to whether they intended there to be no law of libel at all so that not even private individuals would have protection against defamation. I am persuaded that Mr. Justice Black was correct in believing there was to be no restraint on defamation.

As for yelling "Fire!," falsely or not, in a crowded theater, I think it would make a difference if there were a fire. The intent of the crier, then, would have been to warn. Were there not a fire, and people had been injured as a result of the false cry of "Fire!," it could be argued under the "clear and present danger" concept that since substantive harm occurred immediately as a direct result of this exercise of speech, it was punishable.

Somewhat similarly, a bank robber might tell his colleague, "Shoot!" Even though he only spoke, and did not himself pull the trigger, his speech became so quickly brigaded with harmful action that it was no longer protected by the First Amendment.

As for an ad on Mr. Rowland's latest cancer cure, under the First Amendment no publication is required to accept his or anyone else's ad. But let us suppose it is accepted. If his claims are true, there is no problem. If his claims are false, a reasonably responsible publication would have discovered that and required excisions and revisions in the ad. If the false claims get through nonetheless, Mr. Rowland, and presumably the newspaper, might well be subject to whopping damage suits.

It really isn't that hard to discern the boundaries between speech and action (including speech as an integral part of such unlawful conduct as larceny). But while Mr. Rowland was playing these shipboard games, I wondered why he avoided the real current tests of First Amendment freedoms–the rights of the Nazis to demonstrate in Skokie or Anita Bryant's right to say what she pleases without being economically punished through a boycott of her employer.

Conflict of self-interests

I AM PLEASED WITH THE quality of your first issue [Nov. 21, 1977], and hope ensuing numbers maintain the same high standard.

The comments of Ivan Illich on the role of the professions in shaping modern life were of particular value.

On the other hand, despite my admiration for Tad Szulc, his article on the Helms compromise was disappointing. Two central points were missed or omitted. The first was that Helms lied not to protect the national security, but to guarantee himself an ambassador's job; the lie was otherwise unnecessary.

Secondly, "the national interest" which the banks and multinational corporations assisted the CIA in maintaining was something they had a primary hand in defining. To protect them as a favor for pursuing their own self-interest, and for assisting in the implementation of policies which they helped design and foist upon a public whose interests differ, strikes me as insane. The New York–Georgetown centralization of policy-making power needs to be dissolved, not merely understood.

MARTIN SHACKELFORD
Saginaw, Mich.

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